

**INFLUENCE OF APPEARANCE RELATED CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA
AFFECTING BODY IMAGE OF COLLEGE GOING FEMALES IN INDIA**

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Table of content

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	iii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
Human body shape.....	3
Body image and ‘ideal body’.....	4
Significance of body image throughout history.....	5
Traditional Media exposure and body image.....	7
Role of visuals in social media.....	8
Appearance comparison and social media.....	10
Health concerns among young females in India.....	11
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	13
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS & ANALYSIS.....	14
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	24
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	25
REFERENCES.....	27
LIST OF FIGURES.....	30

Abstract

The study focuses on College-going females and their perception of ideal body image generated by themselves and society, which incorporates their peers and influencers around them, relevant to social media. This study analyzes the correlation between social media and body image concerns with regards to photo-based activities, increasing the risk of mental health crisis among young females. To conduct research on this subject, a survey was distributed to 30 respondents. The study analyzed that cultivating and maintaining an 'ideal' appearance has become more important than maintaining healthiness in our culture. It is important to notice that social media is not necessarily creating new problems, but may simply be functioning as a brand-new outlet that individuals can use to interact in maladaptive processes like body comparisons.

Keywords: body image, social media, appearance comparison, peer influence

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Introduction

Social media being the primary channel of communication has a vital role within the lives of young women, and the way they perceive the concept of an ideal body image. ¹Body image may be conceptualized as a compound establishment that represents how individuals “think, feel, and behave with regards to their own physical attributes” (Muth, 1997). Previous studies have been revamped the years about how mainstream media, like different brand campaigns and fashion magazines, idealizes unrealistic beauty standards in the form of various photoshopped images of celebrities and intensely thin professional fashion models.

Now with a wider circle of influencers and followers influencing the contents on social media platforms, it is evident to imagine that social media also has a strong link to body image concerns. Research suggests that there is a correlation between scrolling or spending more time on social media platforms or engaging with more appearance-related content over social media and greater body image dissatisfaction among young women (Tiggemann, 3 September 2016). Several studies have suggested who an individual compares themselves to is the key, similarly, many studies have explored low esteem to be the explanation for negative thoughts towards the body image (Fardouly, 2020). However, little has been done to investigate the effect of micro-influencers and peer group negatively impacting young college-going females.

Several researches have been documented that, images of unattainable bodies in fashion magazines of professional fashion models are thought to have a negative impact on college-going females (Turner, 1997). However, there is a dearth of research on the impact of micro-influencers and peer images on social media channels. The amount of time spent on mobile devices is negatively impacting society. Appearance comparison on social media is one among the factors that results in body concern, causing anxiety and depression (Tiggemann, 3 September 2016). Considering this, the present study examines that social media could also be fueling a mental health crisis among young women.

This study analyzes the correlation between social media and body image concerns with regards to photo-based activities, increasing the risk of mental health crisis among young women. All the appearance-related contents of other people's bodies, either friends, peers, or acquaintances might be affecting how young women view their body image. The question arising

¹ Gupta, C. (2011). *The Relation between Body Image Satisfaction and Self-esteem to Academic Behaviour in Adolescents and Pre-adolescents*. University of Manitoba.

from the research topic on 'How does appearance related content and photo-based activities on social media induces a mental health crisis among college-going females in India?' would be studied and analyzed completely, by using the social comparison theory explaining the cause of body concern and explain the role of social media regarding the emerging mental health concerns among young women in India. This study aims to contribute to the present growing area of research by further exploring the criticisms on body positive movement that either way features a fixation with looks and still focusing on body images. These findings would be created through a survey to accumulate an insight on current social media consumption of appearance related contents and photo-based activities, observing their effect on body image and therefore the effectiveness as motivation to look at bodies for what it does for a healthier lifestyle rather than just focusing on the appearance of an individual. The conclusion would discuss the importance of the study in regards to educating young females in India on media literacy, body image, and wellness.

Summary

The emerging area of research on unrealistic body image and appearance concerns in media is relevant to several social media marketers, physiological researchers, and clinicians. This study aims to analyzes the correlation between social media and body image concerns with regards to photo-based activities, increasing the risk of mental health crisis among young women in India. As the involvement in modern online media is intensifying, it is evident that social media is more interactive than traditional media. The effect of self-representation from the point of view of peers, or acquaintances and brand influencers has set new standards of unattainable beauty and body image.

Literature review

Many recent studies have focused on the problem of beauty standards and images of unattainable body prevailing in the online media, also few researchers have taken appearance comparison, with regards to highly-edited (manipulated) images into consideration. However, the influence of appearance content of other people's bodies, either friends, peers, or acquaintances and photo-based activities on social media has been partially explored. The findings would further explain, the role of social media regarding the emerging mental health concerns among young women in India.

In this chapter, the significance through history, current research, relevant theories, definitions of relevant terminologies, research gap, and supporting evidence would be discussed and critically evaluated.

Human body shape

A search of previous literature associated with somatology defines the studies of constructs like size, build, shape and form.²Somatotype is a classification of human body shape and body type or physique type, developed by William H. Sheldon, in the 1940s. According to W.H.Sheldon, based on the skeletal frame and body composition human beings can be classified into three extreme body types. Most people generally can have the particular or even a combination of all three body types; such as ectomorph, mesomorph, endomorph (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

³Ectomorph (Linear type): Fashion models and athletes fit into this body type of long, lean with very less body fat. They have a narrow frame with thin arms and legs.

Mesomorph (muscular type): This body type has a proportionate amount of muscles, and curves in their body.

Endomorph (Bulky type): Considering the previous types, this body type has more fat and muscles.

The study suggests that human body shapes can be classified and divided into 3 categories.

But it has been seen through physiological aspects there can be more relevant body types

² The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2020, February 11). *Somatotype*. Retrieved from Encyclopædia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/science/somatotype>

³ THE 3 SOMATOTYPES. (n.d.). *Health and Human performance*.

depending on the lifestyle and genetics. A combination of these body types is more likely to be accepted as a human appearance or physical appearance.

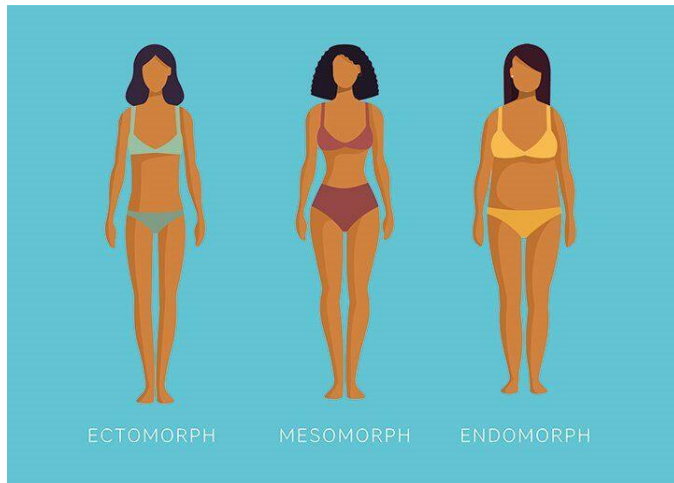


Figure 1: Somatotype

Body image and 'ideal body'

Body image is defined as how people feel about the way they appear and also the way their body functions (Freedman, 1984). ⁴Body image could also be conceptualized as a compound establishment that represents how individuals “think, feel, and behave with regards to their own physical attributes” (Muth, 1997). Muth and cash (1997) say that body image can include an individual’s thoughts about their appearance such as; weight, shape, complexion and, height. There is certain complexity regarding the development of body image prevailing among young females. Researches demonstrates that it can be shaped by an individual’s mindset and biology, as well as the influence of peer groups, family, media, and the society and culture in which they live (Freedman, 1984). Two individuals can look identical yet reflect differently on their body images based on their influences.

The relation based on the perceptual aspects of body shape and apparel shape is often seen in the fashion industry. The female body shapes are particularly based on the standards set by the society, which is quite subjective and depicted differently in different cultures. The Body Shape Assessment Scale (BSAS©) developed by Connell et al. (2006) contains nine variants assessing frontal body shapes. The BSAS© uses digitally illustrated female body silhouettes (Figure 2) to represent each of the four body shapes based on the following landmark locations to differentiate whole body shapes: shoulder point to shoulder point, the frontal waistline, and

⁴ Gupta, C. (2011). *The Relation between Body Image Satisfaction and Self-esteem to Academic Behaviour in Adolescents and Pre-adolescents*. University of Manitoba.

the widest point between the waist and crotch line, as seen from the front (Connell et al.,2006). Apple, or inverted triangle; Banana, straight, or rectangle; Pear, spoon, bell, or triangle, and Hourglass, X shape, triangles opposing, or facing inwards. The algorithm used in this calculator is based on a study published in the ⁵International Journal of Clothing Science and Technology (karla, 2004).

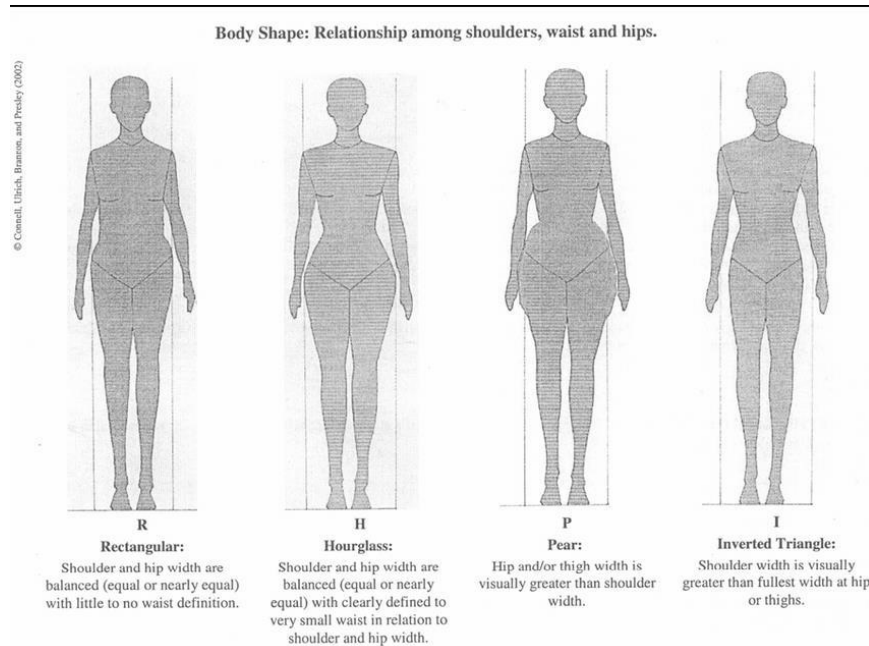


Figure 2: The Body Shape Assessment Scale (BSAS©) developed by Connell et al. (2006)

In western cultures, the Hourglass body shape is presented as the ⁶‘ideal shape’, the perfect form is typically one with balanced hips and shoulders with a narrow waist (Sidberry, 2011). Some researches demonstrate evidence showing that equating beauty with the hourglass figure is not a novel or recent phenomenon shaped by the mass media; the allure of the hourglass figure is evident across generations in ancient cultures (Singh, 2006).

Significance of body image throughout history

Perceptions surrounding beauty standards and body image, not only vary by culture but have evolved significantly throughout history. Throughout times, body image began with numerous attempts to fully understand ⁷neuropathological forms of body experiences (Parker, 2009).

⁵ karla, C. a. (2004). Female figure identification technique(FFIT) for apparel. *Journal of textile and apparel, technology and management*, Volume 4, Issue I.

⁶ Sidberry, P. A. (2011). *Effects of Body Shape on Body Cathexis and Dress Shape Preferences of Female*. Auburn, Alabama: Auburn University.

⁷ Parker, R. (2009). *The Female Body and Body Image:A Historical Perspective*. Women, Doctors and Cosmetic Surgery © Rhian Parker.

Women's ideal body image has depended upon standards of beauty and desirable marks at different periods throughout history in different cultures. History shows that the concept of ideal body and beauty aspirations can be dated back to early civilization.

Venus figurine dating back to 28,000 to 25,000 BCE from the upper paleolithic age also known as 'nude women' is the most familiar female figure to date (Kuiper, July 11, 2018). Culturally the symbol of Venus is ⁸an expression of health and fertility, grandmother, goddesses, or as self-depictions by female artists (William Haviland, 2010). The depiction of the figures shows the earliest body type preference with large breasts a lack of feet and faces, suggests that these sculptures were made by women drawing a self-perspective of their bodies due to the lack of accessibility of mirrors. In Ancient Egypt, women with slender body and narrow shoulders were idealized. ⁹*Nefertiti*, (beautiful women has come) the Akhenaten's queen is one of the most well know images in history and viewed as the ideal female among the queens of Egypt (Parker, 2009). In sculptures from Classical Greece and Ancient Rome, the female bodies are more tubular and regularly proportioned (Paglia). Historically, the Han dynasty, Chinese people favored the ideal body with ultra-femininity. During the Italian Renaissance, full body, light hair, and light skin all were thought of as the superior indications of beauty. Through fitted bodice or corsets originated from Crete in Greece, by the ¹⁰Minoan people it was certainly more idealized in the 14th and 16th centuries with desirably plump, full-figured, and cinched-waist (Downs, May 2013). While the corset continued to be fashionable till the 18th century, it shortened, became more conical, and consequently began to emphasize the waist. It also lifted and separated the breasts as opposed to the 17th century corsets which compressed and minimized the breasts (Hollander, 1993). As the 20th century ascended the ideal of femininity was depicted in a drastic slimming figure. From the S-corseted Gibson Girl to the liberating 'flapper' the idealized image paved the way to more prim and informal body image. Post world-war the classic example of an ideal body was Marilyn Monroe, the Golden Girl of Hollywood (c. 1930s – 1950s) bringing back the hourglass figure. With the emergence of the supermodel era athletic body was celebrated, as this era also saw an emergence of anorexia, thought by

⁸ William Haviland, H. P. (2010). Anthropology: The Human Challenge. In *13th edition* (pp. 205-208). Cengage Learning.

⁹ Parker, R. (2009). *The Female Body and Body Image: A Historical Perspective*. Women, Doctors and Cosmetic Surgery © Rhian Parker.

¹⁰ Downs, C. A. (2013). *INFLUENCE OF FASHION INDUSTRY AND MEDIA ON INDIVIDUAL BODY PERCEPTIONS HELD BY FEMAL COLLEGE STUDENTS AS COMPARED TO PERCEPTIONS HELD BY MIDDLE-AGED FEMALES*. Waco, Texas: Submitted to the Faculty of Baylor University.

some experts to be caused by a widespread obsession with exercise. The current 21st century brings forward the ideal beauty standards for the modern women with high expectation to be flat Stomach, ‘Healthy’ skinny, large breasts and butt, along with a thigh gap. ¹¹The last 100 years of evolution has idealized attractiveness, with subtle changes within the era. Gradually through the timeline, the overall body structure of ideal body has slimmed down, with dramatic flattening of overall body and willingness of a more youthful aesthetics (Hollander, 1993).

Traditional Media exposure and body image

Summarizing the research literature on mass media, there is strong support for the idea that traditional forms of media (e.g. magazines, music videos, and advertisements) affect perceptions of beauty and appearance concerns by leading women to internalize a very slender body type as ideal or beautiful (Jennifer S. Mills, 2017). Post-world war, there was a major difference in the body type ideals that became the standard of beauty among young women. The contrast between body types of Marilyn and Twiggy were viewed as the ideal images, and both were considered to be an ¹²‘product of media’, it can be argued that they can be considered the inception for media creating ideals which women strive to attain (Downs, May 2013). The promotion of unrealistic body images is derived from the media which also influences the children’s play item, such as Barbie. With the introduction of Barbie dolls in ¹³1959 girls are inspired to achieve these unrealistic beauty standards from a very young age. Statistics provided by Margo Maine in her book “Body Wars: Making Peace with Women’s Bodies: An Activists Guide” state that there are two Barbie dolls sold each second and that the target market are girls aged 3-12, and most girls acquire 7 Barbie dolls on average though the duration of their childhood (Maine, 2000). Online research shows that the main perceived social influences on body image were the media (43.5%), advertising (16.8%), and celebrity culture (12.5%) (Freedman, 1984). Advertisement has vastly regulated the gap between the average consumer and the ¹⁴unrealistic, unattainable and perfect ‘appearance ideals presented in the media. Advertising, consumer magazines, and the fashion industry were seen to be too dependent on

¹¹ William Haviland, H. P. (2010). Anthropology: The Human Challenge. In *13th edition* (pp. 205-208). Cengage Learning.

¹² Downs, C. A. (2013). *INFLUENCE OF FASHION INDUSTRY AND MEDIA ON INDIVIDUAL BODY PERCEPTIONS HELD BY FEMAL COLLEGE STUDENTS AS COMPARED TO PERCEPTIONS HELD BY MIDDLE-AGED FEMALES*. Waco, Texas: Submitted to the Faculty of Baylor University.

¹³ Maine, M. (2000). *Body wars: Making peace with women’s bodies: An activists guide*. Carlsbad: CA: Gürze Books.

¹⁴ Freedman, R. J. (1984). Reflections on beauty as it relates to health in adolescent females. *Women & Health*, 9(2-3), 29–45.

models that were not reflective of the general public and not a realistic body weight (Freedman, 1984). It was suggested by Stephanie Iffil, 'The Impact of the Ideal Beauty on Women' that; "when people compare themselves to these unrealistic images they feel dissatisfied with their own bodies, which can lower their self-esteem." Exposure to ¹⁵fashion magazines was related to women's greater preoccupation with being thin, dissatisfaction with their bodies, frustrated about their weight, and fear about deviating from the thin standards (Turner, Hamilton, Jacobs, Angood, & Dwyer, 1997). The media not only emphasize that female self-worth should be supported by appearance, but present a strong cultural ideal of female beauty that is becoming increasingly unattainable (Richins, 1991).

Role of visuals in social media

Social media are interactive, web-based platforms that allow users to make and distribute content. Social media is not inherently positive or negative in terms of its effects on the body esteem of users, instead, its effects depend largely on the way within which it is utilized (Puglia, 2017). Social media is used by 3.5 billion people worldwide. active social media users around the world is estimated to be 90.4% of Millennials, 77.5% of generation X, and 48.2% of Baby Boomers. Study suggests that social media may be a new avenue for people to interact in ¹⁶maladaptive body comparison processes, creating a requirement for health communication and behavior change interventions that address this issue, especially among vulnerable populations (Puglia, 2017).

Various studies show individual's motivation for social media usage, they include entertainment, personal utility, information seeking, convenience, altruism (Al-Menayes, 2015), socialization, status-seeking (Prieler, 2014), reassurance, validation (Perloff, 2014), and social comparisons to assess one's opinions or abilities (Cramer, 2016). Among Social network sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blogging/vlogging, YouTube, Snapchat etc., Facebook is currently the most popular platform with over 1.15 billion current users worldwide. Introduced in 2010, Instagram had already been adopted by 59% of young adults just six years

¹⁵ Turner, S. L. (1997). The influence of fashion magazines on the body image satisfaction of college women: An exploratory analysis. . *Adolescence*, 32(127), 603-14. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/195926512?accountid=6724>, Vol. 32, Iss. 127, (Fall 1997): 603-14.

¹⁶ Puglia, D. R. (2017). *SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND ITS IMPACT ON BODY IMAGE: THE EFFECTS OF BODY COMPARISON TENDENCY, MOTIVATION FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE, AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM ON BODY ESTEEM IN YOUNG WOMEN*. North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Master of Arts in the School of Media and Journalism (Interdisciplinary Health Communication).

later in 2016, quickly surpassing the older and more text-based platform, Twitter, which was used by only 36% of young adults that same year (SHANNON GREENWOOD, 2016). These sorts of social networking sites increase the number of messages being sent and communication that happens through images. Images play a crucial role in how we view ourselves and the way we shape our world, also as on our specialize in body-normativity (Tiidenberg, 2015). Posting images is one way for women to gain control over body-normativity and their sense of acceptance by the social media community (Tiidenberg, 2015). According to Tiidenberg and Cruz (2015) ‘selfies’ are the specific images that are taken by an individual-self to take control over their bodies, as it is able to manipulate the way they look. When people view any regular image of themselves, they feel other’s point of view and reaction and feel as though they do not fit the ideal body standards. This is one of the main reasons why selfies and image sharing have become such a popular aspect of social media (Tiidenberg, 2015).



Figure 3: Social Media Stats in India - August 2020

Media figures over these social networking sites are often labeled as ¹⁷‘opinion leaders’ or influencers. These figures are, “portrayed as having significant influence over others as they selected, modified, and transmitted information/messages of their choosing to the wider public- in essence controlling both the means and the message” (Bell, 2016).

During the time where technology and innovation prevails within the advanced society, airbrushed photos are preferred in magazines and advertisements. Usage of photo manipulation

¹⁷ Bell, K. (2016). *Social Media and Female Body Image*. Virtual Commons - Bridgewater State University In BSU Honors Program Theses and Projects.

is popular in the media industry and the conception of ‘perfect’ and ‘ideal body’ blurs out the difference between reality and fiction. Although this awareness exists, Dr Adrienne Key from the Royal College of Physicians determined that digital manipulation was damaging and that; “retouching is part of the unrealistic nature of images, which has become a malignant process.” (Freedman, 1984).

Appearance comparison and social media

Several evidences submitted suggests that body image is one component of self-esteem (i.e. the opinion one has of themselves and their value as a person) and self-concept which these constructs cannot be considered in isolation from each other (Freedman, 1984). It is important psychologically for people to possess a well-rounded self-concept and to value themselves for several different reasons. A small number of studies also addressed underlying processes and found that appearance-based social comparison mediated the relationship between ¹⁸SNS use and body image and eating concerns (Grace Holland, 2016). Body surveillance is a result of higher social media use which refers to monitoring one’s own body and becoming judgmental of it. The excessive feeling of body-shame comes through body surveillance. watching profiles of attractive people results in a more negative body image. There are many “fitspiration” accounts on Instagram, posting about diet and exercise so as to be thin, and it's common for people to filter or photoshop their posts on Instagram so as to get rid of blemishes. However, there is no research to date directly testing the question of whether media images change people’s perceptions of what is considered average or typical but, Studies show that women generally want their bodies to appear a certain way ¹⁹, depending on (1) what they think other people find attractive and (2) what they think the average person looks like’ (Jennifer S. Mills, 2017).

Peer interaction plays a major role in body image and ²⁰internalization, which can often be found in the form of social networking since this type of media allows for communication between numerous peer and social groups (Bell, 2016). Social psychologist Leon Festinger (1954) in his ‘Social comparison theory’ explains how individuals evaluate their own opinions and abilities by comparing themselves to others, in order to reduce uncertainty in these

¹⁸ Social networking sites

¹⁹ Jennifer S. Mills, A. S. (2017). *Beauty, Body Image, and the Media Chapter 8*. Toronto, Canada: Department of Psychology, York University.

²⁰ Bell, K. (2016). *Social Media and Female Body Image*. Virtual Commons - Bridgewater State University In BSU Honors Program Theses and Projects.

domains, and learn how to define the self (Krayner, Ingledew, & and Iphofen, 2007). According to Schooler et al. (2004), upward comparisons have been found to correlate with depression of mood, whereas downward comparisons are more likely to elicit elevation of mood (Das, 2016). The ²¹Tripartite Influence Model indicates that regardless of the source (family, peers, and the media) of the sociocultural influence, the process of social comparison acts as a key mediating factor in the development of body dissatisfaction and subsequent disordered eating behaviors (Puglia, 2017). Therefore, it is important to think about social comparisons, and particularly appearance comparisons, and their effects on these body image concerns, especially within the context of social media.

Health concerns among young females in India

World health organization (WHO) defines ‘Health’ as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (world health organisation, 1946). Studies have been conducted to determine social media’s effects on psychological outcomes such as mood, depression (Davila, 2012), and self-esteem (Gonzales, 2011), as well as physical health outcomes such as disordered eating behaviors (Smith, 2013). Previously determined by WHO, that depression will be the second most global burden of disease in the world by year 2020, is widely experienced by young adults. It is a concern for young adults, since 25% of 18-25-year old’s report having some form of mental illness (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2019). Though it can be partially estimated that using social media can lead to depression and anxiety symptoms, however, it can also be suggested that people who are already more depressed or more anxious use social media. Researchers believe that one problem is that social media use can disrupt sleep, and poor sleep can lead to anxiety and depression (Kelly Y, 2018).

Poor mental health is strongly related to other health and development concerns in young people, notably lower educational achievements, substance abuse, violence, and poor reproductive and sexual health (DrVikramPatel, 2007). Women who report higher levels of social comparison are at greater risk to develop extreme preoccupation with weight and appearance, and are also more likely to display disordered eating patterns and/or clinical eating disorders (Das, 2016). Eating disorders may induce secondary health issues including severe

²¹ Puglia, D. R. (2017). *SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND ITS IMPACT ON BODY IMAGE: THE EFFECTS OF BODY COMPARISON TENDENCY, MOTIVATION FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE, AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM ON BODY ESTEEM IN YOUNG WOMEN*. North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Master of Arts in the School of Media and Journalism (Interdisciplinary Health Communication).

malnutrition, menstrual problems, sexual and social maladjustments, and large weight fluctuations (Harrison, 2014).

Summary

In this chapter, it is suggested that often genetics determine body shape and weight. Our genetics would determine our physiques which can be categorized by ectomorphic, mesomorphic, or endomorphic. The portrayal of ideal beauty standards is not an exclusive western conception, but has been in our culture and society throughout history. Unlike traditional media that advertises images of models and celebrities, social media portrays “idealized” images of the user’s peers. The increase in the statistics of multiple visual media, including social networking sites, which is heavily consumed by the youth is exacerbating the importance of appearance content. People compare themselves to those ideals or edited images and desire what they are doing would not qualify which causes poor body image. Such dissatisfaction and body image concerns lead to several mental and physical health conditions among the young women.

Methodology

The study focuses on College-going (undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate) females and their perception of ideal body image generated by themselves and society, which incorporates their peers and influencers around them, relevant to social media. This study analyzes the correlation between social media and body image concerns with regards to photo-based activities, increasing the risk of mental health crisis among young females.

To conduct research on this subject, a survey was distributed to respondents. The population of respondents consisted of female college students from the Design and management colleges in Kolkata. College going females in India, mostly in a very metropolitan city (urban region). Respondents were between the ages of 18-25 starting from college freshmen to seniors. And their average per capita income is about ₹10,000/m. As per, psychographic they like Modern lifestyle, Innovation and influence, Content oriented on social media, increase public engagement.

Survey Design

This study had 30 respondents. The sort of survey was a questionnaire containing 20 questions. Questions included multiple-choice or require scale responses. Out of 20 only 2 questions were optional to answer and also the entire survey was anonymous. Participation during this survey was also optional. The survey was distributed electronically through google forms, a web survey software. Google form allows for electronic, online surveys to be distributed to the participating population.

Limitations and future directions

Focusing on instant effects over one variable limited our study. There was also a limited sample size of only 30 students covering a small demographic area. Having a bigger sample size from numerous colleges rather than only one could offer better and more accurate results to represent female college students as an entire. Covering a larger audience, having more diversity, having multiple levels of education, and belonging to different universities could help boost the study and supply more data on body image for various groups. Future work should investigate whether social media together with peers and also the surrounding environment affects young men's body image and if certain individuals are more littered with social media content with peers and society.

Results & Analysis

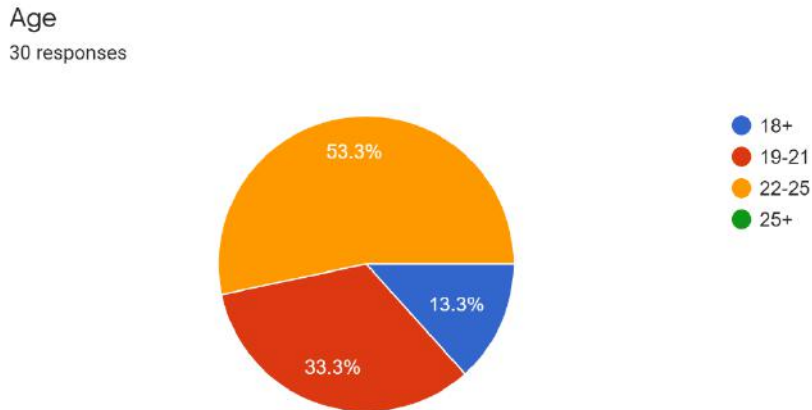


Figure 4: Demography of respondents

The demographic characteristics of the study sample (n=30) are presented in fig.4. The participants were all 18 to 25-year-old females, with the mean age of respondents being 21.5 (SD=2.29).

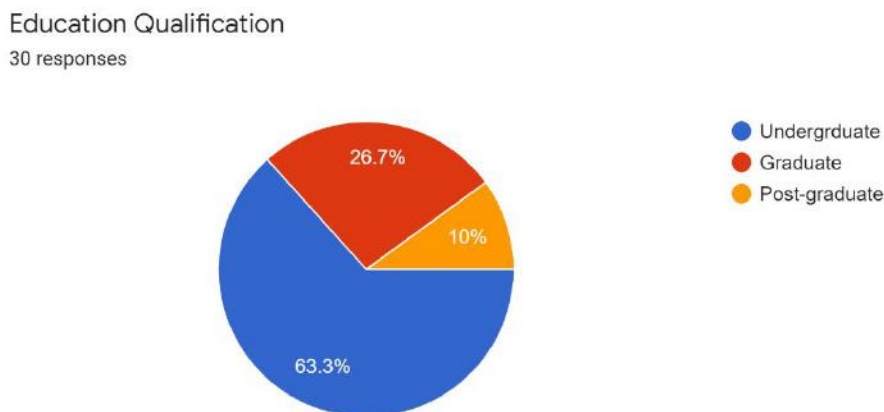


Figure 5: Qualification of respondents (optional)

Respondents were sampled for college attending females, where it was found that 63.3% were undergraduate, 26.7% were graduate and 10% were post graduate student.

Do you have a social media account? (ex. Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, twitter etc.)
30 responses

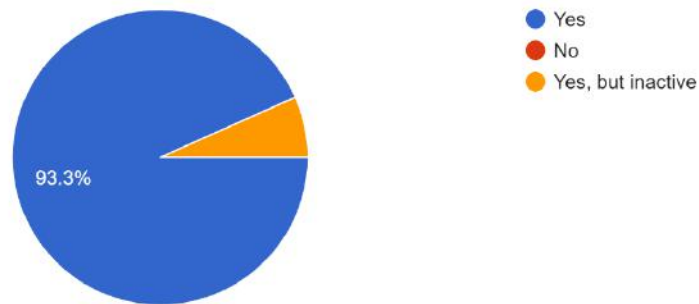


Figure 6: Social media presence of respondents

Respondents' presence on social media was analyzed, where it was found that all the respondents (n=30) had a social media account. 93.3% were active users and rest were inactive. It could be assumed that it has become a necessary to actively participate in any social media networking for the purpose of communication.

On which "social media" sites do you spend most time on (in 24 hours)?
30 responses

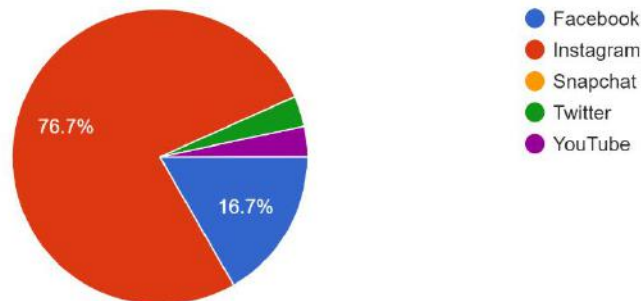


Figure 7: Social media site preference of respondents

Results of the respondents performed to examine the different preference between various social media platform. It was found that most respondents, nearly 76.7% preferred to be on Instagram, which highly promotes image related content.

How much time do you spent on social media (in 24hrs)?
30 responses

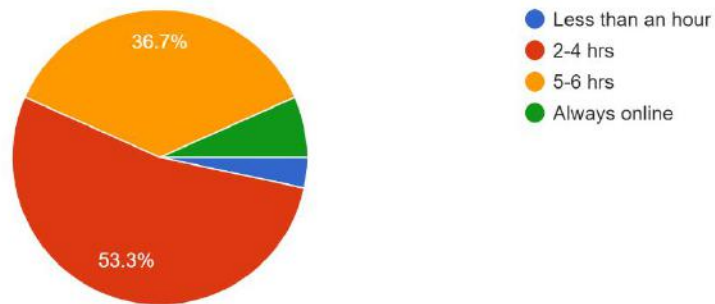


Figure 8: Duration of respondents on social media

Respondents were told to measure their time duration on social media sites on the basis 24 hours timeline. Majorly 53.3% were found to have been using social media for 2-4 hours per day. That can conclude that respondents are exposed to various content for an fairly hour in their everyday.

"I consider myself to be well informed and aware of media influences"
30 responses

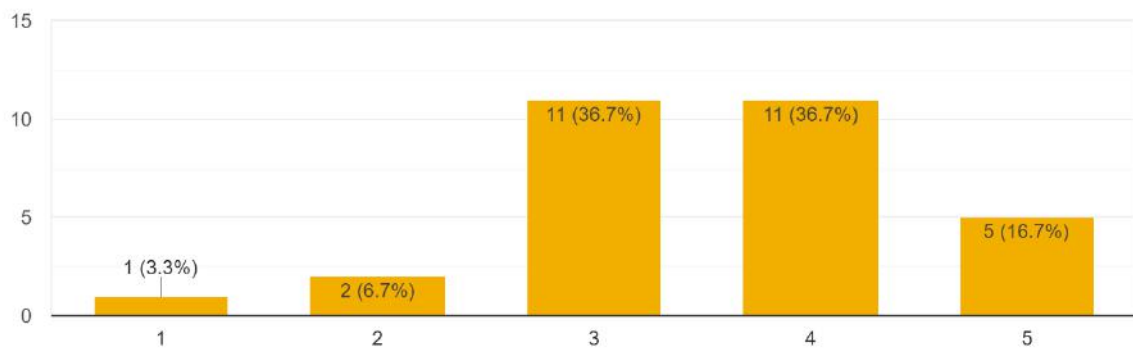


Figure 9: Awareness of respondents

On the scale of low to high, 36.7% were either neutral or slightly higher regarding awareness of influences on social media. It shows that most of the young females in India are yet to be aware and gain knowledge of the effects of media.

How aware are you of social media images and influences in your everyday life?
30 responses

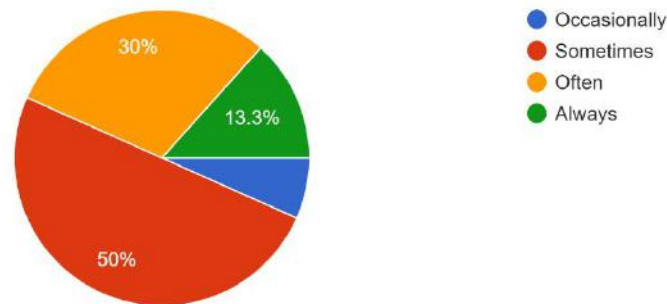


Figure 10: Awareness in everyday activity of respondents

Respondents' data showed that 50% were minorly conscious about their social media activities on an everyday basis, and only 13.3% showed total awareness of their activities on social media platforms.

Do you experience negative body image when exposed to appearance content on social media?
30 responses

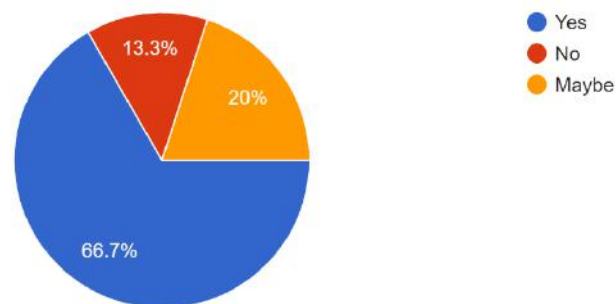


Figure 11: Content exposure on social media

Results show that 66.7% respondents experience negative body image while exposed to appearance related content on social media sites. It shows that lack of understanding and awareness of effects of image on social media can lead to having a negative body image.

Have photos of people on social media made you feel self-conscious about your shape?
30 responses

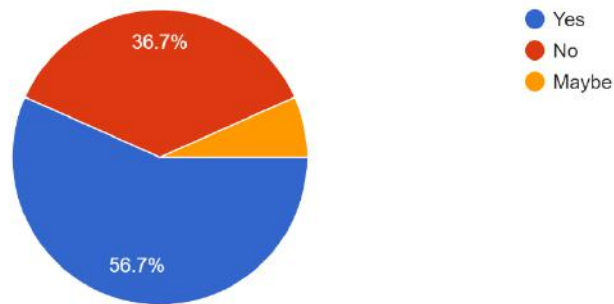


Figure 12: Body image consciousness of respondents

Due to high exposure to image content on social media site and lack of awareness 56.7% respondents feel exposed and shows concerns about their body image.

Have you been particularly self-conscious about your shape when in the company of your peer?
30 responses

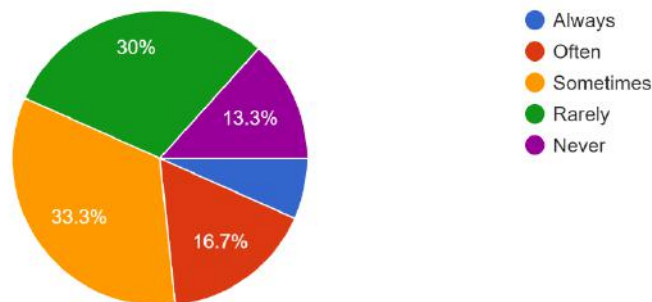


Figure 13: Peer comparison

Results show that respondents 'sometimes' feel self-conscious about their body image when in company of their peer group. Data shows that 30% of respondents 'rarely' are self-conscious when around their peer.

What is the first thing you notice when you see an image of any person on social media?
30 responses

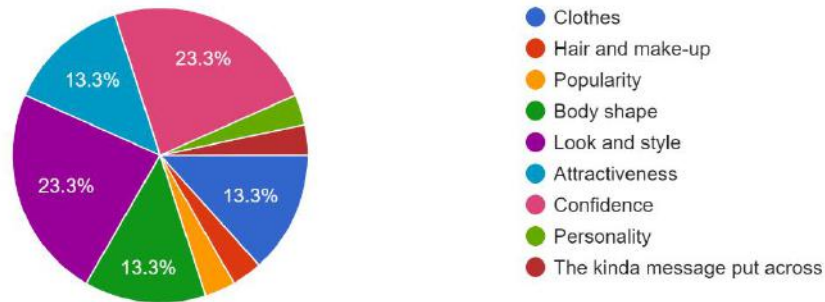


Figure 14: Traits noticed by respondents on social media

On different variables our respondents were asked to select the first trait that catches their focus or attention when they look at any image of a person on social media. On various variable ‘confidence’ & ‘look and style’ had equal response of 23.3%. ‘clothes’ and ‘body shape’ had 13.3% response.

Have you or someone you know ever had body image issues?
30 responses

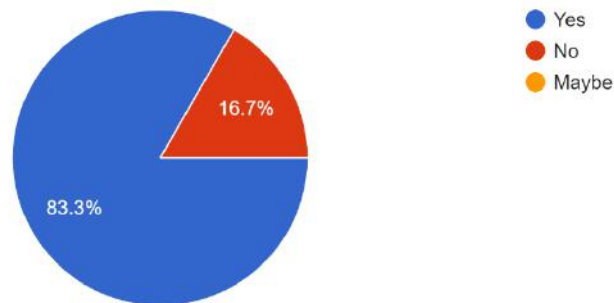


Figure 15: Body image concerns

According to data majorly 83.3% respondents said that they or someone they know had encountered body image issues.

"I am more likely to compare my body to my peer than to celebrities"

30 responses

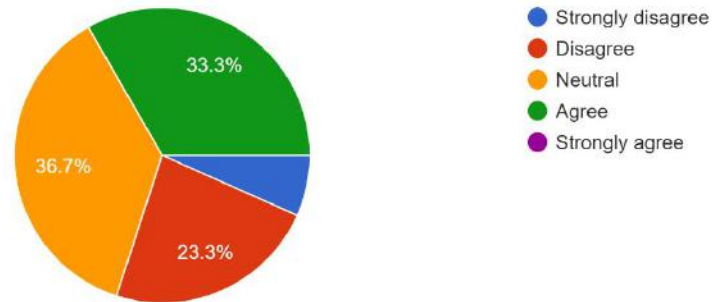


Figure 16: Appearance comparison

"I am more likely to compare my body to micro-influencers than to supermodels or celebrities"

30 responses

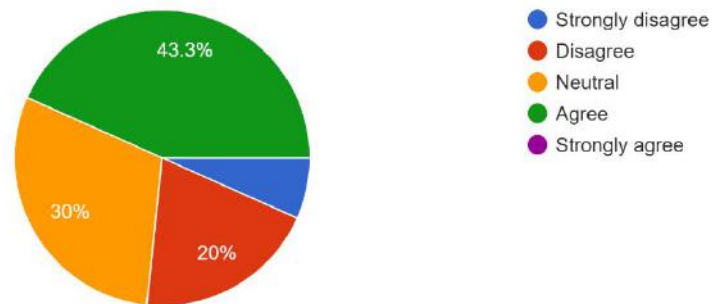


Figure 17: Appearance comparison

The above data(s) clearly shows that respondents are more vulnerable towards peer and influencers than celebrities or models. Respondents are more exposed to social media, though they are aware of the effect of celebrity and model, effects of peer group in social media is yet to be discussed on.

"I believe social media portrays unrealistic body ideals for women"

30 responses

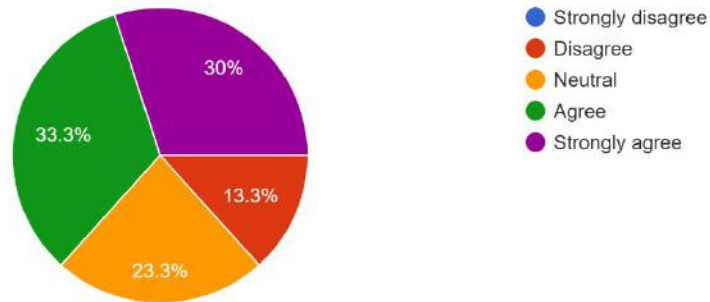


Figure 18: Unrealistic body ideals

The variety of Responses shows that effect of unrealistic body image on social media totally depends on the fact on what kind of content respondents follow over social media. About 33.3% would agree upon the say that they believe social media plays an important role to promote and show unrealistic body image for women.

Do you feel any pressure to retouch or improve your photos on social media?

30 responses

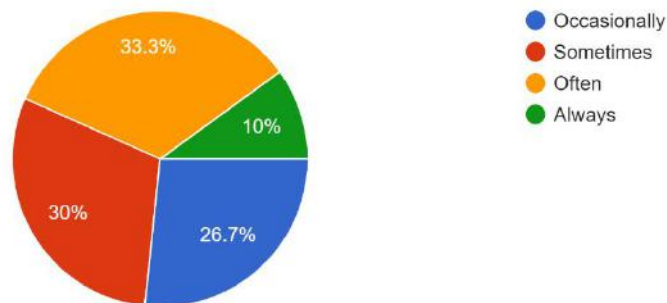


Figure 19: Photo-manipulation

Respondents' data shows that photo manipulation is prevalent in the culture. The need to look perfect or without any flaws are necessary on social media platforms. The use of filters and other photoshop technology makes it more accessible to create an unrealistic image over the social media.

Have you ever followed a diet?

30 responses

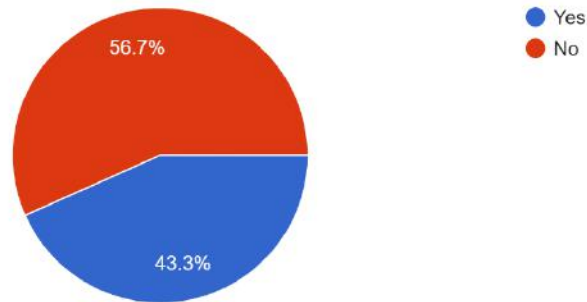


Figure 20: Past Diet of respondents

16 responses

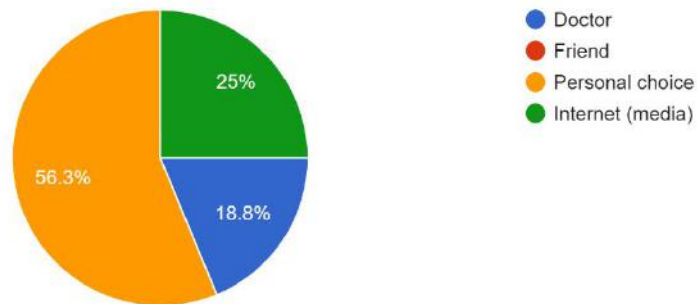


Figure 21: Diet consultant of respondents

Respondents were asked to share their past experience or adopting any form of diet plan. Majority denied to have followed any diet in the past. And others were 56.3% have or had a diet plan as per their personal choice.

Has worry about your shape made you feel anxious or depressed?
30 responses

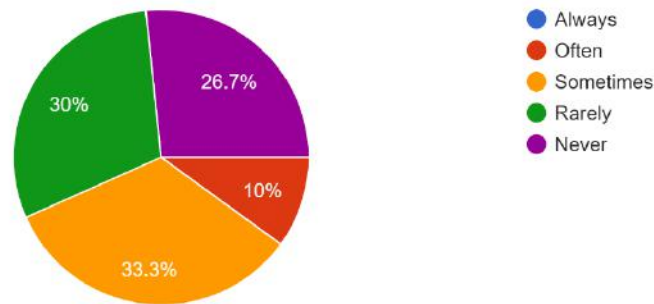


Figure 222: Mental health of respondents

Respondents rated their feeling of anxiety and depression regarding their body image and shape or how they look. Almost 33.3% of respondents had some experience regarding mental health in context of their shape. Social media can be one of the reasons of a mental health crisis among the young females in India.

Pick out things you love about yourself?
30 responses

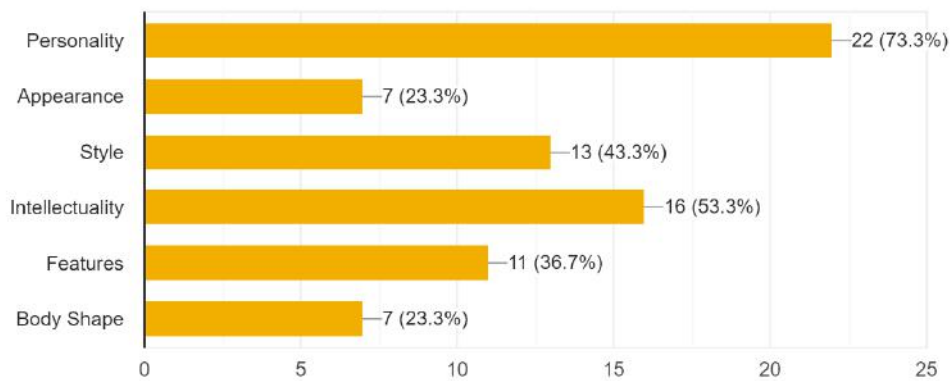


Figure 23: Self-awareness of respondents

Respondents were asked to share their thoughts about what they love about themselves. Based on the parameters of personality, appearance, style, intellectuality, features and body shape, 73.3% rated their 'personality' to be their best traits.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate the role of appearance-related content in social media in reflecting societal perceptions of the body image. According to the hypothesis it absolutely was found that women's body image satisfaction is influenced by consumption of appearance-related content and its effectiveness as motivation to measure a healthier lifestyle, influencing young Indian women's body ideals.

Consistent with the Social comparison Theory and Tripartite Influence Model body comparison tendency and body image displayed a negative association for the young women during this study. Therefore, these results strengthen the argument that engaging in appearance content and body comparisons among peer features a negative influence on body image among young females. According to the high statistics data of social media use among young women, it had been hypothesized that girls who are more involved in body comparisons among their peers would utilize social media for the identical purpose of image comparison. This hypothesis was supported within the data with an outsized correlation being observed between appearance-related content and therefore the motivation to use social media for body comparison. It is also important to notice that this study measured users' self-reported motivation to interact in body comparison on social media and failed to measure the frequency with which users engaged during this behavior.

Results show that young adult women who actively engaged with the image-based social media of attractive peers (upward social comparison targets) would have a more negative body image. Our findings align with the advice that body image media literacy programs should highlight social media use, especially pressures related to viewing images of others (Grace Holland, 2016) ,and peers particularly. However, like other social media and body image research findings, our effect size was small and possibly negligible in real-world terms. Thus, these results must not be overstated.

Conclusion

A review into the dimensions of the matter of appearance-based content and the way this might be best tackled. The study analyzed that cultivating and maintaining an 'ideal' appearance has become more important than maintaining healthiness in our culture. a specific body aesthetic has now become related to health and wellbeing, and it's this appearance and build that's aimed for, instead of overall personality and health.

Steps that could be effective for spreading awareness regarding body image concerns among young females in India.

- Educating about photo manipulation i.e. media distortions.
- Share how "ideal" body shapes have changed over time.
- Spread words and talk about the kinds of messages being given in commercials and other programming.
- Avoiding extreme dieting and diet discussions.
- Avoid weight-related comments about self and others.
- Engage in regular, balanced physical activity that is effective and enjoyed.
- Providing a supportive environment with lots of discussions.
- Keeping the lines of communication open.

The prevalence of social media use, especially among young women, makes it imperative to check the ways within which these individuals are using social media and therefore the impacts that this media form may have on users. The results of social media on young women's body image are of particular concern since this population is already at higher risk for negative outcomes. The results of this study support previous empirical evidence indicating that a big correlation doesn't exist between users' overall time spent on social media and negative impacts on outcomes like body image and appearance content (Meier & Gray, 2014). During this study the correlation between overall social media use and appearance content wasn't significant, therefore it's likely that the results of social media use on young women are probably not an instantaneous results of the general amount of time spent using these sites, but rather on factors like predisposing individual characteristics, users' motivations for using these sites, the particular experiences that young women have on social media, and also the psychosocial processes that they engage in while spending time on these platforms. It is important to notice that social media is not necessarily creating new problems, but may simply be functioning as a

brand-new outlet that individuals can use to interact in maladaptive processes like body comparisons. Therefore, further work should be done to look at the factors that influence how young women utilize social media and also the ways within which these factors ultimately influence body esteem on various social media platforms.

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List of figures

Figure 1: Somatotype	4
Figure 2: The Body Shape Assessment Scale (BSAS©) developed by Connell et al. (2006)	5
Figure 3: Social Media Stats in India - August 2020	9
Figure 4: Demography of respondents	14
Figure 5: Qualification of respondents (optional)	14
Figure 6: Social media presence of respondents	15
Figure 7: Social media site preference of respondents	15
Figure 8: Duration of respondents on social media	16
Figure 9: Awareness of respondents	16
Figure 10: Awareness in everyday activity of respondents	17
Figure 11: Content exposure on social media.....	17
Figure 12: Body image consciousness of respondents	18
Figure 13: Peer comparison	18
Figure 14: Traits noticed by respondents on social media	19
Figure 15: Body image concerns	19
Figure 16: Appearance comparison.....	20
Figure 17: Appearance comparison.....	20
Figure 18: Unrealistic body ideals	21
Figure 19: Photo-manipulation	21
Figure 20: ast Diet of respondents	22
Figure 21: Diet consultant of respondents	22
Figure 22: Mental health of respondents	23
Figure 23: Self-awareness of respondents.....	23