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The Effects of Social Media Use and Social Media Influencers on Body Dissatisfaction and Self-esteem of Young Women

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RUNNING HEAD: Social Media and Influencers' Impact on Body Image and Self Esteem
The effects of social media use and social media influencers on body dissatisfaction and
The effects of social media use and social media influencers on body dissatisfaction and self-esteem of young women
self-esteem of young women
self-esteem of young women Devin Eagan

Abstract

In 2021, 4.5 billion people worldwide were actively using social media, a 28% growth between 2019 and 2021 (Kemp, 2021). Influencers- social media users with many followers who show their daily lives to followers- have also become increasingly prominent (Chae, 2018). While significant research has been done on the impact of traditional media on body dissatisfaction, less is known about the effects of social media on body image. Previous research has indicated that repeated exposure to traditional media featuring thin women has a negative impact on body image. This study hypothesizes that women who spend more time on social media will report lower body satisfaction, and women who follow more social media influencers will have lower self-esteem levels. 51 females (mean age = 21.33, standard deviation = 1.78, range = 18 to 25) were recruited by social media and from psychology classes at a small private university and completed a brief demographic survey, their time spent on social media and the number of influencers followed, and then completed the Body Attitude Test, and the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale. Pearson correlations revealed no significant relationship between body satisfaction and time spent on social media (r = -0.219, p = 0.131) or between the number of social media influencers followed and self-esteem (r = -0.129, p = 0.366). These findings do not support the hypothesis that increased social media use and social media influencers are damaging young women's image and self-esteem. However, this is still a new field of interest and more research is needed to test these relationships.

Keywords: Social Media, Body Image, Self Esteem, Influencers

The effects of social media use and social media followers on body dissatisfaction and self-esteem of young women

In 2021, 4.5 billion people worldwide actively used social media, a 28% growth from 2019 (Kemp, 2021). Along with this significant increase in social media use, "influencers" - social media users with many followers who textually and visually show their daily lives to followers - have become increasingly prominent (Chae, 2018). While there is no concrete number of followers a user must have to be considered an influencer, it is estimated that 3.2-37.8 million social media users have over 1,000 followers (*How Many*, 2021). Lowe-Calvery and Grieve (2021) define influencers in four categories: mega-influencer (more than 1 million followers), macro-influencer (100,000 -1 million followers), micro-influencers (1,000 -100,000 followers), and nano-influencers (less than 1,000 followers). Approximately 28% of young adults (16-23) and 23% of adults 24-37 follow social media influencers (*More*, 2021). As social media use has increased, researchers have begun investigating the possible impacts that social media use could have on mental health, including anxiety, depression, and body dissatisfaction. While significant research has examined the impact of traditional media on body dissatisfaction among women and girls, less is known about the effects of social media on body image.

Media Influence on Body Image

Previous research has indicated that repeated exposure to traditional media featuring thin women has a negative impact on body image (Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008). While traditional media is static and non-personalized (i.e., billboards and magazines), social influence may be heightened by social media exposure because it tends to be in real-time, more personalized, and there is constant access; in addition, there is an estimated 3.2 million new photographs posted on social media every day, which creates more opportunities for social comparison than ever before

(Mingoia et al., 2017). There is significant evidence that weight and shape dissatisfaction and preoccupation are predictors of eating disorders and depression (e.g., Askew et al., 2020; Flores-Cornejo et al., 2017).

However, research suggests that body image is less important to men than to women. Casale and colleagues (2021) investigated the effects of multiple exposures to appearance-focused Instagram posts on the body image of males and females. They hypothesized that being repeatedly exposed to appearance-based images will negatively affect body dissatisfaction and body investment and that this effect will be stronger for women than for men because previous research has shown that men place less importance on body image when evaluating themselves. The authors found that women exposed to attractive images showed increases in body dissatisfaction, self-evaluation, and criticism, but there was no significant difference in levels of women's self-esteem between the control and experimental groups. This pattern of findings was not found in men, which supports previous research that suggests body image has less of an effect on men. In addition, Phillips and de Man (2010) found that while men are not immune to societal body ideals, they tend to place a lower importance on attractiveness. These findings suggest that exposure to images of attractive people on social media can have a negative impact on women's body image and lead to or exacerbate women measuring their value by their appearance (Casale et al., 2021).

Social Comparison

People who frequently view influencers' social media posts about their daily lives are more likely to compare their lives to those of the influencers (Chae, 2018). Influencers commonly post about things that their followers do not have but want (e.g., luxurious vacations, high-end products), and while some followers experience vicarious satisfaction, others may feel

envious of the influencer's life. Chae's study longitudinally examined the response of envy toward influencers that followers experience. Those who frequently viewed influencers' posts and had an interest in their daily lives were more likely to compare their lives to those of influencers, which is a strong positive predictor of envy. These results indicate that viewing the daily lives of influencers is likely to lead to social comparison and envy. However, those who view influencer posts for information acquisition (e.g., travel, food, fashion, etc.) were not as likely to experience envy. Therefore, we must consider not only the people that we follow but why we follow them. Their study expanded the research on social media and social comparison, however, there were some limitations. Their study was an opt-in online panel and only focused on young women with smartphones. In addition, exposure and comparison to influencers were measured with a single question, which may result in measurement error. Finally, their study did not differentiate between active social media use (i.e., posting, viewing, liking, etc.) and passive social media use (only viewing).

Body Positivity and Fitness Inspiration

Lowe-Calvery and Grieve (2021) also discovered that people who viewed influencer posts had higher negative mood and body dissatisfaction than those who did not. Many influencers use social media for fitness inspiration, to encourage their followers to exercise. However, findings suggest that these kinds of posts do not lead to increased exercise, but do result in decreased mood and body dissatisfaction (Prichard et al., 2020).

In addition, many influencers post pictures with body-positive captions, hoping to encourage self-love among their followers. Tiggemann, Anderberg, and Brown (2020) experimentally tested how body dissatisfaction and body appreciation were affected by body-positive Instagram captions on images of average bodies and thin bodies. They found that

captions had no significant impact on body satisfaction regardless of image type, even when controlling for pre-exposure body dissatisfaction. However, there was a significant effect on image type, as participants who viewed thin body images reported higher body dissatisfaction than those who viewed average images while viewing average images showed a decrease in body dissatisfaction. Results also indicated that body appreciation was affected by the participant's thin-ideal internalization. Thin-ideal internalization is the degree to which somebody bases their attractiveness on being thin. The authors interpreted these findings to suggest that body-positive posts rely more on image content than captions, and when added to images of thin women, they may be seen as disingenuous or counterproductive. In addition, constantly viewing "body positivity" accounts that tend to focus on thin-ideal, even with body-positive captions, may be harmful.

Possible Negative Impact of Social Media Use

There is concern about the impact social media may have on mental health, particularly body dissatisfaction, self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. Sherlock and Wagstaff (2019) found that depressive symptoms, trait anxiety, social comparison orientation, physical appearance anxiety, and body image disturbance were positively correlated with time spent on Instagram, number of followers, and number of people followed. Findings to date indicate that social media may not be as bad for body images as may be believed by the public, but can be dangerous for certain groups (e.g., adolescents) and for those who use social media to post or view appearance-focused posts. In addition, type of social media use, body image dimension, and race are all important factors in this relationship; higher effect sizes were found in studies investigating body image and appearance-focused use, compared to those investigating general social media use, as well as more specific dimensions of body image (cognitive and behavioral

compared to general/evaluative). Also, race and ethnicity seemed to impact effect size, and individuals who identify as Caucasian are more influenced by idealized images (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019).

Current Limitations to Research

Because research on the effects of social media and influencers on body image and self-esteem is newly emerging, there are still many gaps in the current knowledge. Most current research about the effects of social media use on body dissatisfaction and self-esteem has focused on Instagram and Facebook or was done before new platforms such as Tik Tok have risen in popularity (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019). Tik Tok is a video sharing and viewing app which allows users to create videos with dancing, lip-syncing, and comedy (*What is*, 2021). Tik Tok has approximately 689 billion active users worldwide and its uses in America jumped 800% between January 2018 and June 2020 (Kemp, 2021). In addition, more diverse samples are needed for future research to gain a better understanding of social media's overall impact (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016).

The Current Study

Given that social media use may have negative effects on body image and self-esteem and that this is often magnified by the use of social media for appearance-focused activity, I hypothesize that women who spend more time on social media will report lower body satisfaction. In addition, I hypothesize that women who follow more social media influencers will have lower levels of self-esteem.

Methods

Design

This cross-sectional study evaluated the relationship between aspects of social media(social media use and following social media influencers), and body image and self-esteem.

Participants and Procedure

Participants were recruited through a social media post on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn. In addition, participants were recruited from psychology classes at Dominican University of California. In order to be included in the present study, participants must identify as female and be between the ages of 18-25 years old. Participants were sent an anonymous online survey created with Qualtrics and provided informed consent. They then completed the demographic questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and Body Attitude Test, and were thanked for their participation and provided with a website that provides information and resources for people experiencing body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem.

Measures

Demographic information. A background questionnaire asked participants for their basic demographic information, such as age, gender, and ethnicity (Appendix A). In addition, they were asked to report their daily time spent on social media as reported by their device's screen time report from none to 7+ hours, and an estimate of how many social media influencers they follow from zero to 30+.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Bringle et al., 2004), which is a 10-item self-report scale that uses a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) (Appendix B). Fleming and

Courtney (1984) reported strong reliability of the RSES, with a one-week test-retest reliability of r = 0.82 (Bringle et al., 2004), a coefficient alpha of 0.91, and Item Convergent Validity of 0.57-0.79, and Item Discriminant Validity of 0.27-0.52 as compared to the Social Relationships Scale in the Participation Measure for Post-Acute Care (Sinclair et al., 2010).

Body Attitude Test. The Body Attitude Test (BAT; Probst, Van Coppenolle, & Vandereycken, 1995) was used to measure body satisfaction (Appendix C). The BAT is a 20 question self-report questionnaire that measures how one perceives their own body and attitude toward one's body. This test uses a 6 point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 5 (always). Scores range from 0 to 100, where higher scores indicate a more disturbed body experience. One-week test-retest reliability was high; r = 0.92, there is evidence of strong internal reliability (alpha = 0.93), and good convergent and discriminant validity with other validated measures, including the Video Distortion & Eating Attitudes Test, Eating Disorder Inventory, and the Beck Depression Inventory (Probst, Van Coppenolle, & Vandereycken, 1995).

Results

51 female participants ages 18-25 (Mean=21.33, SD=1.73) completed the study. Of the participants, 58.62% identified as Caucasian, 10.34% as Hispanic, 26.86% as Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.45% as African American, and 1.72% as Native American. 20.45% of participants were nursing majors, 11.63% were psychology majors, 11.63% were dance majors, 11.63% were health science/biology majors, 4.54% were history majors, 9.09% had more than one major, 13.64% had no major or had graduated, and 15.90% majored in another subject. Participants were asked to report their time spent on social media, which was recorded by their smartphones. 10.20% reported spending 0-1 hours a day on social media, 61.22% spent 2-3 hours, 20.41%

spent 4-5 hours, 2.04% spent 6-7 hours and 6.12% spent 7 or more hours on social media. Additionally, participants were asked to estimate how many social media influencers they follow. 2.04% follow zero influencers, 48.98% follow 1-7 influencers, 14.29% follow 8-14 influencers, 8.16% follow 15-21 influencers, 2.04% follow 22-29 influencers and 24.49 follow more than 30 influencers (see Table 1).

A Pearson correlation was used to test the hypothesis that women who spend more time on social media would report lower body satisfaction. The correlation was not significant (r = -0.219, p = 0.131; Figure 1). This suggests that there is not a relationship between time spent on social media and body satisfaction as measured by the Body Attitude Test. Although not statistically significant, the correlation coefficient was in the "small" range.

To test the hypothesis that women who follow more social media influencers would report lower levels of self-esteem, a Pearson correlation was also used. There was no significant relationship between the number of social media influencers followed and self-esteem (r = -0.129, p = 0.366); this suggests that there is no linear relationship between self-esteem and social media followers. However, the correlation coefficient was in the "small to medium" range (Figure 2). Taken together, these findings do not support the hypotheses that increased social media use and social media influencers are damaging to young women's body image and self-esteem.

Table 1:Demographics and study variables

Variable	N	%
Time spent on Social Media		
0-1 Hours	5	10.20%
2-3 Hours	30	61.22%
4-5 Hours	10	20.41%
6-7 Hours	1	2.04%
7+ Hours	3	6.12%
Number of Influencers Followed		
0	1	2.04%
1-7	24	48.98%
8-14	7	14.29%
15-21	4	8.16%
22-29	1	2.04%
30+	12	24.49%
Major		
Psychology	5	11.63%
Nursing	9	20.45%
N/A / Graduate	6	13.64%
Dance	5	11.63%
Health Science/Biology	5	11.63%
History	2	4.54%
Other	7	15.90%
2+ Majors	4	9.09%

	Mean (SD)	Range
Age	21.33 (1.78)	18-25
BAT	57.47 (16.24)	18-84
RSES	22.69 (1.87)	17-26

Note. BAT = Body Attitude Test; RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

Figure 1:

Relationship between time spent on social media and body dissatisfaction

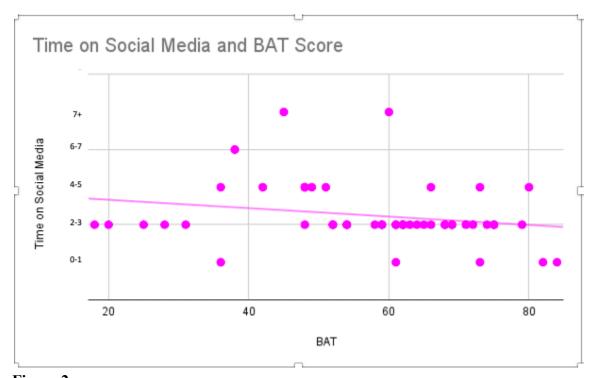
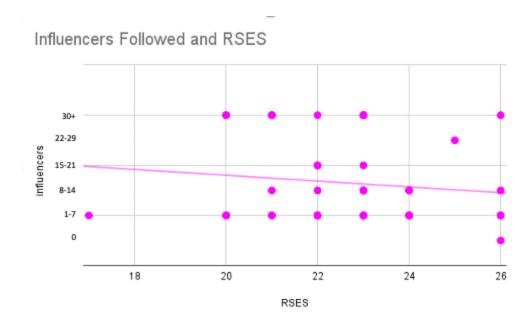


Figure 2:

Relationship between number of influencers followed and self esteem score



Discussion

This study sought to expand the literature on the impacts of social media use and social media influencers on body image and self-esteem among women. Given that social media use may have negative effects on body image and self-esteem, and that this is often magnified by the use of social media for appearance-focused activity, it was hypothesized that women who spend more time on social media will report lower body satisfaction. In addition, it was hypothesized that women who follow more social media influencers will have lower levels of self-esteem. Results did not support either hypothesis, as there was no significant relationship between body satisfaction and time spent on social media or self-esteem levels and social media influencers followed. However, effect size estimates were in the "small to "medium" range.

It had been hypothesized that as social media use increases, body dissatisfaction would also increase. Previous research has indicated that depressive symptoms, trait anxiety, social comparison orientation, physical appearance anxiety, and body image disturbance were positively correlated with time spent on Instagram, the number of followers, and the number of

people followed (Sherlock & Wagstaff, 2019). Additionally, Casale and colleagues (2021) found that women exposed to attractive images showed increases in body dissatisfaction, self-evaluation, and criticism. However, there was no significant relationship between social media use and body dissatisfaction rates found in the present study. These findings suggest that social media usage may not have any impact on body satisfaction among young women.

It was also hypothesized that as the number of social media influencers followed increases, self-esteem would decrease. Research has suggested that people who frequently view influencers' social media posts about their daily lives are more likely to compare their lives to those of the influencers (Chae, 2018). Lowe-Calvery and Grieve (2021) also discovered that people who viewed influencer posts had higher negative mood and body dissatisfaction than those who did not. Many influencers use social media for fitness inspiration, to encourage their followers to exercise. However, findings suggest that these kinds of posts do not lead to increased exercise, but do result in decreased mood and body dissatisfaction (Prichard et al., 2020). Despite previous research showing a relationship between social media influencers and self-esteem, no significant relationship was found in this study.

Strengths & Limitations

There are several possible limitations to this study that may have contributed to the lack of statistically significant results. First is that sample size may have precluded significant findings, as a "small" relationship via the Pearson correlation requires a sample size of approximately 385 participants to be considered statistically significant. It is therefore possible that relationships between body dissatisfaction and time spent on social media or self-esteem and social media influencers do exist, but that there simply were not enough participants to detect an effect. Another possible limitation in all psychological research is social desirability. Even when

studies are anonymous, as this one was, participants may alter their answers so that they are viewed as acceptable. Another limitation is that this is a correlational study based on self-report. so there was no way to evaluate causation or to control for outside factors such as social media platforms used, how participants use social media (eg. passive viewing, liking, commenting, and posting), and other factors which may influence a participant's self-esteem and body image, like social and familial environment. Additionally, while the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale is widely used, the Body Attitude Test is used less frequently, which means that it is possible other self-report measures may be more sensitive to test the constructs in this study. Another limitation may have been the sample itself: this study only focused on women between the ages of 18-25 and mainly recruited participants from a private university in California, which means that this sample may not be representative of the population; other subgroups may be more sensitive to the effects of social media than the age range tested here. Finally, the present study did not account for the type of social media use- passively viewing as opposed to posting, liking, and commenting on others' posts. Some strengths of this study include the standardized survey which was anonymous which allowed for participants to answer questions anonymously. In addition, correlational data tends to be more easily applied to real world situations, because it doesn't involve the controls and manipulation involved in an experiment.

Future Directions

Future research should recruit larger samples of participants in order to detect smaller relationships between time spent on social media and body dissatisfaction or social media influencers followed and self-esteem. Longitudinal studies may provide greater insight as to how social media use may affect participants' body satisfaction and self-esteem, and which individuals are more susceptible to the effects of social media use. In addition, individually

evaluating the use of different social media platforms may provide some valuable insights into which platforms have stronger effects on body attitudes and self-esteem. Finally, research should examine a wider range of populations including men, adults over the age of 25, and adolescents.

Implications

Findings from this study suggest that increased social media use and social media influencers may have no influence on self esteem or body satisfaction. This could be because of an increase in body positivity related content as well as an increased understanding that social media only shows what people want the public to see and is not how everyone's whole life is. Society will undoubtedly continue to use social media; despite the findings of prior research, this study raises the possibility that increased social media use may not have negative effects on body dissatisfaction or decreased self esteem among women.

Conclusion

This study did not find support for the hypothesis that increased time spent on social media use would lead to increased body dissatisfaction as well as the hypothesis that the number of social media influencers followed would decrease self-esteem levels. However, there were some limitations to this study, such as the sample collected, the sample size, and measures used. Future research should focus on larger samples and more diverse populations than the one sampled in this study. However, it is important to consider past research as well, which has often presented evidence that there is a relationship. Thus, findings from the present study should be considered in light of the aforementioned limitations. Because social media is a newer concept, this is a young body of research that should be developed more in the future.

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Appendix A Demographics:

What is your gender? Male Female I do not wish to disclose Other
What is your age?
What is your race/ethnicity? White/Caucasian Black/African American
Asian/Pacific Islander American Indian Hispanic/Latin(o/a)
I identify with more than one Other
What is your current major? in
Minor (if you have one)
How much time a day do you spend on social media (Instagram, Twitter, TikTok,
Facebook, etc- based on screen time reported by your device(s))?
How to do this on an iPhone: Open the Settings app > Select Screen Time > Select See All
Activity. You should then be able to view your daily screen time
How to do this on an Android: Open the Settings app > Select Digital Wellbeing and parental
controls > Select Dashboard > Select the hourglass. You should then be able to view your daily
screen time.
0-1 Hours
2-3 Hours
4-5 Hours
6-7 Hours
7+ Hours
Approximately how many social media influencers do you follow (A social media influencer
is a social media user with many followers (1,000+) who textually and visually show their

daily lives to follower)

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	_ 0
	_ 1-7
	_8-14
	_ 15-21
	_22-29
	30+
Wha	at social media platforms do you use? Mark all that apply.
	t social media platforms do you use? Mark all that apply. Instagram
	Instagram
	_Instagram _Facebook

_Other

22

Appendix B

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale RSES

Rate the items using the following scale:

1 = strongly agree 2 = agree 3 = disagree 4 = strongly disagree
1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. I certainly feel useless at times.
10. At times I think I am no good at all.

Appendix C

Body Attitude Test

Mark how frequently you feel each of the following statements

		A L W A Y S	U S U A L L Y	O F T E N	S O M E T I M E S	R A R E L Y	N E V E R
1	When I compare myself with my peers' bodies, I'm dissatisfied with my own						
2	My body appears to be a numb thing						
3	My hips seem too broad to me						
4	I feel comfortable within my own body						
5	I have a strong desire to be thinner						
6	I think my breasts are too large						
7	I'm inclined to hide my body (e.g. by loose clothing)						
8	When I look at myself in the mirror, I'm						

	dissatisfied with my own body
9	It's easy for me to relax physically
10	I think I'm too thick
11	I feel my body as a burden
12	My body appears as if it is not mine
13	Some parts of my body look swollen
14	My body is a threat for me
15	My bodily appearance is very important to me
16	My belly looks as if I am pregnant
17	I feel tense in my body
18	I envy others for their physical appearance
19	There are things going on in my body that frighten me

20	I observe my appearance in the mirror			

IRB Approval Letter



Dec 02, 2021

Devin Eagan 50 Acacia Ave. San Rafael, CA 94901

Dear Devin,

On behalf of the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants, I am pleased to approve your proposal entitled <u>The effects of social media use and social media influencers on body dissatisfaction and self-esteem of young women</u> (IRBPHP Initial IRB Application #[11013]).

In your final report or paper please indicate that your project was approved by the IRBPHP and indicate the identification number.

I wish you well in your very interesting research effort.

Sincerely,

Michaela George, Ph.D. Chair, IRBPHP

Cc: Joshua Jordan



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS (IRBPHP)

INITIAL APPLICATION

IRBPHP INITIAL APPLICATION

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

INITIAL APPLICATION

All information must be typed and submitted electronically to <u>irbphp@dominican.edu</u> Handwritten applications will be returned to researcher.

A signature page must accompany all applications. Numbers in parentheses refer to explanatory sections in the IRBPHP Handbook. Please use these as a guide in providing the requested information.

APPLICANT INFORMATION (8.1)

Name: Devin Eagan

Date: 15 October 2018

School: Dominican University of California

Department: Psychology

Campus or Local Address: 21 Clyde Ave. San Rafael, CA 94901

Home Address: 2016 Piute St, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

(Note: If different from campus/local address please provide home address for contact during periods when you may not be living on campus or locally)

Local Phone: (530) 307-2171

Work Phone: N/A

E-mail Address: devin.eagan@students.dominican.edu

(Note: All communication regarding your application will be by email so be sure you include a

functional email address)

Name(s) of Co-Investigator(s): N/A

FACULTY ADVISOR INFORMATION: (8.2)

Name: Joshua Jordan, Ph.D.

Campus Phone: 415-257-0198

E-mail Address: Joshua.jordan@dominican.edu

Note: All communication regarding a student's application will be by email. Advisors will be copied on all correspondence so be sure to provide a functional email address.

RESEARCH PROJECT INFORMATION: (8.3)

Exact Title of Project: The effects of social media use and social media influencers on body dissatisfaction and self-esteem of young women **Duration of Project** (cannot exceed 1 year): 1 year

Category of Review:

☑ Exempt (5.3.1)☑ Expedited (5.3.2)

□ Full Board Review **(5.3.3)**

Background and Rationale (no more than 300 words). Describe nature of research problem and purpose of current study. **(8.4)** Include references at end for any works cited.

In 2021, 4.5 billion people worldwide actively used social media (SM), a 28% growth from 2019 (Kemp, 2021). Along with this increase in SM use, influencers - SM users with many followers who show their daily lives to followers - have become increasingly prominent (Chae, 2018). Researchers have recently begun investigating the possible impacts of SM use on mental health. While significant research has examined the impact of traditional media on body dissatisfaction among women and girls, less is known about the effects of SM on body image.

Previous research suggests repeated exposure to traditional media featuring thin women has a negative impact on body image (Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008). Casale and colleagues (2021) found that women exposed to attractive images began to define themselves and their self-worth by their physical appearance more. In addition, Chae (2018) found that women who

frequently viewed influencers' SM posts were more likely to compare their lives to those of the influencers, suggesting that frequent viewing of influencer posts may have a negative effect on mental health. Lowe-Calvery and Grieve (2021) also discovered that people who viewed influencer posts had higher negative mood and bodily dissatisfaction than those who did not. Because research on the effects of SM and influencers on body image and self esteem is newly emerging, and has focused exclusively on Instagram or Facebook and not other platforms (i.e., TikTok; Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019), there are still many gaps in the current knowledge.

Given that SM use may have negative effects on body image and self-esteem, and that this is often magnified by the use of SM for appearance-focused activity, I hypothesize that women who spend more time on SM will report lower body satisfaction. In addition, I hypothesize that women who follow more SM influencers will have lower levels of self-esteem.

References

- Casale, S., Gemelli, G., Calosi, C., Giangrasso, B., & Fioravanti, G. (2021). Multiple exposure to appearance-focused real accounts on instagram: Effects on body image among both genders. *Current Psychology: A Journal for Diverse Perspectives on Diverse Psychological Issues*, 40(6), 2877–2886. https://doi-org.dominican.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00229-6
- Chae, J. (2018). Explaining females' envy toward social media influencers. *Media Psychology*, 21(2), 246–262. https://doi-org.dominican.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/15213269.2017.1328312
- Grabe, S., Ward, L. M., & Hyde, J. S. (2008). The role of the media in body image concerns among women: A meta-analysis of experimental and correlational studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, *134*(3), 460–476.
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- Kemp, S. (2011). *Digital Report*. Widen. Retrieved September 19, 2021, from https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/zcdrtxwczn/digital2021_globalreport_en.
- Lowe-Calverley, E., & Grieve, R. (2021). Do the metrics matter? An experimental investigation of Instagram influencer effects on mood and body dissatisfaction. *Body Image*, *36*, 1–4. https://doi-org.dominican.idm.oclc.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2020.10.003.
- Prichard, I., Kavanagh, E., Mulgrew, K. E., Lim, M. S. C., & Tiggemann, M. (2020). The effect of Instagram #fitspiration images on young women's mood, body image, and exercise behaviour. *Body Image*, *33*, 1–6.
 - https://doi-org.dominican.idm.oclc.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2020.02.002

Description of Sample: (check the boxes that pertain to your sample) (8.5)
□Patients as participants
⊠Non-patient volunteers
⊠Students as participants

☐Minor participants (less than 18 years)
□Participants whose major language is not English (Note: include copies of translated
documents)
☐ Mentally disabled patients
□ Prisoners, parolees or incarcerated participants
□Other vulnerable or sensitive populations (children, persons with alcoholism or drug
addiction, LGBT individuals, etc.) Please identify:
☑ Participants studied at non-Dominican locations
☐ Filming, video or voice recording of participants
☐ Data banks, data archives and/or registration records
☐ There is a dual relationship between researcher and participant (explain):

Recruitment Procedure: Indicate how applicant will solicit participation (face-to-face, phone contact, mail, email, etc) along with copies of materials used to recruit participants and permission letters if applicable: **(8.6)**

I will email Psychology professors at Dominican University of California (see Appendix A) and ask for permission to speak to their classes about participating in my study. The script for what I will read to the classrooms can be found in Appendix B. After each announcement, I will email the students in the course explaining the contents of my study and request their voluntary participation (see Appendix C). In addition, I will post a request to social media (Instagram and Facebook) asking for additional participants. The contents of the post can be found in Appendix D.

<u>Subject Consent Process</u>: Attach Informed Consent Forms to be used. If consent forms are not to be used, explain why and provide copy of the Consent Cover Letter. (8.7)

I will collect informed consent for this study using a Letter of Introduction (see Appendix E) which participants will read and sign before beginning the survey. This will inform participants about requirements and the potential risks of the study before they decide to begin and/or complete the survey.

Procedures: Describe in detail what your participants will experience and include copies of all written materials participants will see including surveys, questionnaires, interview questions, etc. Permission to use any copyrighted materials should be included. **(8.8)**

The survey will be administered through Qualtrics and participants will access this survey after receiving an email with the link or through a link from the social media post. I will be looking for female participants only. Each person will voluntarily participate by accessing the survey at their convenience. I will ensure the anonymity of participants by not asking for names or any other personal information and by using Qualtrics, a survey platform which does not record IP address. Participants will respond to questions about their demographic information, their amount of screen time (as recorded by their smart-device), in addition to two self-report measures called the Body Attitude Test (BAT; Probst et al., 1995) (Appendix J), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)(Appendix I). I have received written permission from the author of the Body Attitude Test to be used in my survey (see Appendix F). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is publicly available for use (Appendix G). The complete survey can be found on Appendix H.

Potential Risks to Participants: Describe all potential risks.

Note: <u>All research projects involve some potential risks to participants.</u> Applications that do not address risks will be returned. (8.9)

Participants may experience minor psychological discomfort when answering questions about their attitude toward their body, or questions may exacerbate negative feelings toward one's body. Participants may also feel self-conscious about their amount of screen time and responses to questions about their self-esteem.

<u>Minimization of Potential Risk:</u> Describe ways the Potential Risks to Participants (detailed in section above) will be minimized by researcher. (8.10)

In my Letter of Introduction (Appendix E), I inform participants of the nature of my study. Participants will have the opportunity to decide on participating or not after having read the detailed description of the study. In addition, I will emphasize that participation is completely voluntary and they can choose to withdraw at any time. In addition, participants will be provided with a link to Here to Help, a website which provides information and resources for the prevention and management of mental health problems.

<u>Potential Benefits to Participants</u>: Describe in detail all potential benefits to the individual (focus is individual not society). There is always some benefit – why else do the study. **(8.11)**

By participating in this study, participants will be able to reflect on their social media use and activity and if they believe it may negatively affect their body image and self-esteem. They will also learn more about how they view their body. This study provides an opportunity for participants to see how their social media use may affect their mental health.

<u>Costs to the Participants:</u> Describe any costs to participants (transportation, time, effort, etc.). **(8.12)**

The cost for the participants will be 10-15 minutes of their time to complete the survey.

Reimbursement or Compensation to Participants: Describe and provide rationale for any reimbursement or compensation in response to participation in the research. (8.13)

There will not be any reimbursement or compensation in response to participation to this research.

Confidentiality of Records: (8.14)

☑ Data will be anonymous

How will anonymity be ensured?

I will not be personally identifying participants or asking for their contact information. My survey will be administered through an anonymous platform (Qualtrics) which will not require participants to give their names. This platform will not link IP addresses or emails to the survey.

☐ Data will not be anonymous	
	How will data be kept confidential? Who will see it?
	•
	How will raw data and computerized data be stored?
	The state of the s
	How will participant identity be kept separate from participant data?
	How will participant identity be kept separate from participant data?

(Note: all tapes and records should be destroyed after a period of one year following completion of the research project)

Appendix A Letter to Instructors

Dear faculty name,

My name is Devin and I am a senior Psychology undergraduate at Dominican University of California. I am currently working on my senior thesis, which will measure the relationship between time spent on social media and body dissatisfaction, and the number of media influencers followed and self-esteem among young women. Female students will be asked to take a survey that will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete via Qualtrics. I will examine the results to determine whether more time spent on social media is associated with higher body dissatisfaction and if following more social media influencers has a negative effect on self-esteem.

To better support my study, I would appreciate the opportunity to take a minute to announce this to your classes to recruit potential volunteers. With your permission, I will send you a link for my survey to be sent to your students via email.

Best regards,

Devin Eagan Senior Psychology Major Dominican University of California devin.eagan@students.dominican.edu

Appendix B Recruitment Script

Hi class,

My name is Devin and I am a senior Psychology undergraduate at Dominican University of California. I am currently working on my senior thesis, which will measure the relationship between time spent on social media and body dissatisfaction, and the number of media influencers followed and self-esteem among young women. If you would like to volunteer to participate in my study, you will be asked to take part in a survey. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. I will send out an email with a link that contains information about the study and access to the survey, which you may voluntarily complete. I appreciate the opportunity to announce this study to you and for your participation, in advance.

Thank you for your time.

Thank you, *instructor's name*.

Appendix C Email to Students

Dear participants,

My name is Devin and I am a senior Psychology undergraduate at Dominican University of California. I am currently working on my senior thesis which will measure the relationship between time spent on social media and body dissatisfaction, and the number of media influencers followed and self-esteem among young women. I have chosen to create a survey containing a questionnaire that will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Participation in this study involves filling out questions pertaining to the subject at hand. You will be participating voluntarily and are free to withdraw at any time.

For any questions regarding this research or further assistance, you may contact me at the email provided below. You may also contact my research supervisor, Dr. Joshua Jordan at joshua.jordan@dominican.edu or call him at 415-257-0198.

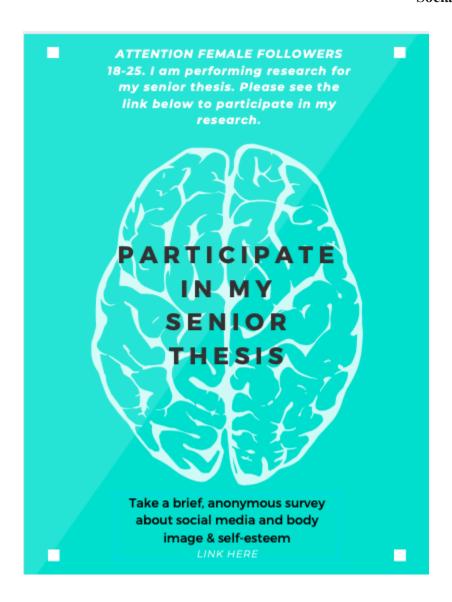
Here is the link to the survey (insert link)

Thank you for your participation.

Best regards,

Devin Eagan Senior Psychology Major Dominican University of California devin.eagan@students.dominican.edu

Appendix D Social Media Post



Appendix E Letter of Introduction

Dear participants,

My name is Devin and I am a senior Psychology undergraduate at Dominican University of California. I am currently working on my senior thesis, which requires me to conduct a research project. My work will be supervised by Dr. Joshua Jordan, an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Dominican University of California. I would appreciate your participation in my study, which will look at the relationship between time spent on social media and social media influencers followed, and body dissatisfaction and self-esteem in young women. For more information about body image and self-esteem, visit this website.

Participation in this study involves filling out a survey of questions pertaining to this topic. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate in this study will not affect your class grade in any way.

In the case that you choose to participate, your responses will remain anonymous. If an identity becomes known, your responses will still remain confidential. To participate in this study, please follow the survey link and answer the questions as honestly as possible. This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes, so please be sure to have this time allotted.

For any questions regarding this research or for further assistance, you may contact me at the email provided below. You may also contact my research supervisor, Dr. Joshua Jordan at joshua.jordan@dominican.edu or call him at 415-257-0198. You can receive additional information from the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which works to protect participants in research. You can contact them at 415-482-3547, FAX at 415-257-0165, or by writing to IRBPHS, Office of Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dominican University of California, 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901.

If you would like to know the results of this study once it has been completed, please contact me at the email address below.

Thank you,

Devin Eagan Senior Psychology Major Dominican University of California devin.eagan@students.dominican.edu

Appendix F **Body Attitude Test Permission**

From: Michel Probst michel.probst@kuleuven.be

Subject: Re: Permission to Use Body Attitude Test for Undergraduate Research

Date: October 4, 2021 at 11:13 PM

To: Devin Eagan devin.eagan@students.dominican.edu



Dear Devin,

I give the permission to use the test for your research. If you need information do not hesitate to contact me. I wish good luck with your research.

Kind regards Michel Probst

Van: Devin Eagan <devin.eagan@students.dominican.edu>

Verzonden: maandag 4 oktober 2021 17:00 Aan: Michel.Probst@faber.kuleuven.be

Onderwerp: Permission to Use Body Attitude Test for Undergraduate Research

Dear Michel Probst,

I am an undergraduate student at Dominican University of California working on my Senior Thesis. I will be studying the effects of social media use on body image and self-esteem.

I found your questionnaire, the Body Attitude Test, measuring subjective body experience and attitude towards one's body and I believe that it would be a good fit for my research. I am writing to ask your permission to use this test in my research.

I appreciate your consideration and please let me know if you have any questions.

Best, Devin Eagan Psychology Dominican University of California '22 devin.eagan@students.dominican.edu





Probst_et_al-20 probst bat.pdf 08-Int...ers.pdf

Appendix G Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale Permission



Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

PsycTESTS Citation:

Rosenberg, M. (1965). Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t01038-000

Instrument Type: Rating Scale

Test Format:

4-point response format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Source

Bringle, Robert G., Phillips, Mindy A., & Hudson, Michael. (2004). Self and self-concept The measure of service learning: Research scales to assess student experiences, (pp. 97-142). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/10677-006

Permissions

Test content may be reproduced and used for non-commercial research and educational purposes without seeking written permission. Distribution must be controlled, meaning only to the participants engaged in the research or enrolled in the educational activity. Any other type of reproduction or distribution of test content is not authorized without written permission from the author and publisher. Always include a credit line that contains the source citation and copyright owner when writing about or using any test.

Appendix H Demographics Survey

		υ	emographics Survey
Demographics:			
What is your gender? Male	Female	I do not wish to disclose	Other
What is your age?			
What is your age? What is your race/ethnicity?	White/C	Caucasian Black/Af	rican American
Asian/Pacific Islander	America	n Indian Hispanic/La	tin(o/a)
I identify with more than on			
What is your current major?			
Minor (if you have one)		<u> </u>	
How much time a day do you sp	end on soc	ial media (Instagram, Twitte	r, TikTok,
Facebook, etc- based on screen	time report	red by your device(s))?	
How to do this on an iPhone: Ope	n the Settin	gs app > Select Screen Time >	· Select See All
Activity. You should then be able	to view you	r daily screen time	
How to do this on an Android: Op	en the Setti	ngs app > Select Digital Wellb	eing and parental
controls > Select Dashboard > Se	elect the hou	rglass. You should then be ab	le to view your daily
screen time			
0-1 Hours			
0-1 Hours 2-3 Hours 4-5 Hours 6-7 Hours			
4-5 Hours			
6-7 Hours			
7+ Hours			
Approximately how many social	l media infl	luencers do you follow (A soc	cial media influencer
is a social media user with many	followers	(1,000+) who textually and v	isually show their
daily lives to follower)			
0			
1-7			
1-7 8-14			
15-21			
22-29			
30+			
What social media platforms do	you use? N	Mark all that apply.	
Instagram			
Facebook			
Snapchat			
Twitter			
—— TikTok			
Youtube			
Other			

Appendix I Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale RSES

Rate the items using the following scale:
1 = strongly agree 2 = agree 3 = disagree 4 = strongly disagree
1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. I certainly feel useless at times.
10. At times I think I am no good at all.

Appendix J

Body Attitude Test

Body Attitude Test Mark how frequently you feel each of the following statements

		A L W A Y S	U S U A L L Y	O F T E N	S O M E T I M E S	R A R E L Y	N E V E R
1	When I compare myself with my peers' bodies, I'm dissatisfied with my own						
2	My body appears to be a numb thing						
3	My hips seem too broad to me						
4	I feel comfortable within my own body						
5	I have a strong desire to be thinner						
6	I think my breasts are too large						
7	I'm inclined to hide my body (e.g. by loose						

	clothing)			
8	When I look at myself in the mirror, I'm dissatisfied with my own body			
9	It's easy for me to relax physically			
10	I think I'm too thick			
11	I feel my body as a burden			
12	My body appears as if it is not mine			
13	Some parts of my body look swollen			
14	My body is a threat for me			
15	My bodily appearance is very important to me			
16	My belly looks as if I am pregnant			
17	I feel tense in my body			
18	I envy others for their physical appearance			

19	There are things going on in my body that frighten me			
20	I am observing my appearance in the mirror			

Social Media and Influencers' Impact on Body Image and Self Esteem

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Appendix K

End of Survey Thank You with Information

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses will allow me to further analyze the relationship between social media use and influencers on body image and self-esteem for working with future young adults with body image or self-esteem issues. For more information about body image and self-esteem, visit this website.

Thank you!

Devin Eagan

Senior Psychology Undergraduate

Dominican University of California