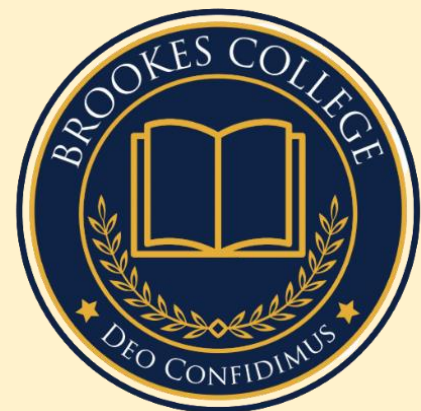# Social Media Play Regarding Body Image: An Adolescents Battles Regarding Beauty Standards

CASILLA, Althea Nathalie A., COMILANG, Angeli V. Jeah, DELFIN, Danielle Iris L., HAUSHALTER, Nicole Fergus B., GOMEZ, Ivon Ralenz E., MARRON, Princess Nicole V.

September 2021

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Abstract: Social Media has been one of the major factors that have been influencing the emotional and mental wellbeing of young adolescents in our current generation. Social Media's profanity into leading said beauty standards online has left such a major impact within a teenager's self esteem and confidence as these said 'perfect body image' being advertised, isn't something that is easily attained by everyone. This study aimed to bring light upon the Social Media's play regarding Body Image and how it affects young adolescents, along with finding: a.) The influences of social media regarding the perspective of adolescents towards their own body image; b.) The challenges that adolescents encountered as they went through the standards of social media in terms of body image; c.) The coping mechanisms of adolescents towards the media's influence on beauty standards. Furthermore, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers utilized a qualitative type of research wherein we have gathered our data using a semi structured interview with open-ended questions using an online questionnaire that is constructed through Google Forms. After gathering the data, the researchers used Thematization to analyze our collected data informations from our participants. The encountered major challenges and influences of adolescents mainly derived from them being easily persuaded to follow the current beauty standards they see online. Morever, the results imply that social media has left such great influence on adolescents as these unattainable beauty standards they see online made their insecurity flunctuate and lower their self-confidece further. Nonetheless, the respondents managed to overcome these challenges by having coping mechanisms like social media detoxification, reflection, and interaction with family and friends. With that being said, the researchers would like to advocate towards the adolescents to terminate themselves from living up to the ideal world and appreciate what they have and what their body can do.

Keywords: Social Media, Beauty Standards, Adolescents, Influences, Challenges, Coping Mechanisms

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Media play regarding body image have skyrocketed throughout the years as mass media has been a dominant force of swaying the thoughts and actions of humans, especially the current generation of the teenagers. Social Media has been influencing and manipulating society in many ways, it decides what the public sees and how it is supposed to be directly pressuring us to live up into their established beauty norms. This means that the adolescent mindset, eventually being persuaded by social media, led them to be consumed to follow the society's ideal beauty and physical attractiveness therefore sacrificing their mental health state at stake.

Body image is defined as feeling, perceptions beliefs according to one's own body(Gillen & Markey, 2016). Certain studies claim that body image is very central to an adolescent's self definition and as though they have been socialized to believe that appearance is an important basis for self-evaluation and for evaluation by others. In this modern generation, communication has never been easier. With the presence of social media, information can easily be spread throughout vast audiences. As the grasp of social media grows, it also affects beauty. It has been a big contributor to beauty standards of both male and females. Social media affects how people perceive themselves and how they function in society. The media has been showing females how to 'fit in' through various standards.

These standards include having the 'ideal body type' in order to be considered beautiful. Therefore, both the social media and the internet have become such a fundamental parts of everyday living- not only stresses that self-worth should be based on appearance but it also presents a powerful cultural ideal of beauty that is becoming increasingly unattainable. Madaraog(2014) stated that as the current generation, we are more awake about certain social issues and with this, the line between what is real and what is not tends to be blurred out on social media and certain ideas of beauty standards are being generated making people believe that the pathway to success is significantly achieved by aligning the way they look like with that social media is portraying us to be. Therefore, the lack of satisfaction with oneself has became a norm leading the minority to declare themselves as 'beautiful'.

The body standards are harsh that according to a research conducted by the

Florida House Experience, out of 1,00 men and women, 87% of women and 65% of men compare their bodies with what they see on social media .The study that Dove, 2016; Andreassen, Pollesen & Griffiths, 2017; Primack & Escobar-Viera,2017 also highlighted the growing low self esteem of the adolescents throughout the years. Society and its advertising of beauty standards has historically included stereotypical and unrealistic images of women and encouraging the masses that the thin ideal is what every woman should strive for to gain happiness consequently leading young girls to become obsessed with their appearance.

This unattainable beauty standard has often lead to person's down of self esteem. Adolescents from the United States were also interviewed regarding their body image. They were able to say that the current social media has been a major force in the development of dissatisfaction regarding their body image. These 13-19 year old American teens, tend to over think about their appearance and at the same time, worry about how other people sees them. The same way goes to the study conducted in both in Norway and India and how the Norwegian and Indian adolescents felt the urge to change their body at their age of 15. This suggests that biological factors, such as body size and psychological characteristics such as low self-esteem and perfectionism all contribute to such significant growth of body dissatisfaction.

The increase of cultural beauty standards and fashion trends has also impacted Filipino Teens that according to Tedena, Kang and Kim(2020) who wrote the research paper "The Influence of Social Media Affinity Eating Attitudes and Body Dissatisfaction in Philippine Adolecsents" Filipino adolescents from a coeducational private school in Cavite Province, Philippines. They were able to acquire informations saying that the female participants affinity into social media is higher amongst the male participants making them prone more opportunities of comparing their physical appearance towards the photos and videos they see on Facebook and Instagram.

The significance of the study regarding the media play of body image could distinctly impact the diversely minded and distinct mind of the people of the society. Starting off with the adolescents, this research paper could provide a way of understanding and an essence of reality that they shouldn't be brainwashed of what the society wants them to be and that there is no need for them to compromise with the "ideal looks" and "perfect body" that they see via social media for them to be able to "fit in' towards the general public.

In this way this research can also benefit parents as this may serve as a guide for them to be able to lessen the exposure of their children towards an indirect and not so subtle discrimination of the society use. A conversation between a parent and a child will let the parent teach their offspring for them to be able to build self worth from the inside to out.

Lastly, Future Researchers can benefit from this research as it supplies more information regarding media play regarding body image that are not much discussed about on other platforms. The future researchers may gather data from this research for them to be able to expand and perceive the deeper meaning on how media play regarding body image affects the certainty of an adolescents well being and hoping that they may also be encouraged to expound on this topic and their psychological impacts as these are interesting subjects that needs to be studied further.

With what is said, the researchers undergo their own analysis to examine over. Primarily aimed at both Lorma Junior High and Senior High students, this research would like to address the effects that media play regarding body image has impact the students and their way of perspective especially focusing on their emotional and psychosocial well-being. It would also depict their personal experiences and altered perspective and interpretation of what media play is and being able to show as an articulate view regarding their own affected behavior.

1.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework:

This study is predominantly focused on the media play regarding body image towards teenagers and how this idealism affected their whole well-being. From that given, this research would use this theoretical construct devising three theories related to the topic at hand.

Starting off with the theory proposed by social psychologist, Leon Festinger named, Social Comparsion Theory in which he stated that individuals tend to engage themselves in comparison with others for them to be able to determine their worth and their status towards the current social standing. This theory also indicates that individuals seek out targets for comparison for the aspects of the self they consider important. This research relates to this theory as teenagers tend to compare themselves in relation to what they see on social media.

They tend to juxtaposed their current physical appearance alongside the 'idealistic' figure that social media tends to predominantly impose amongst their posts. To strengthen this theory further, Burrow & Raine, 2017; mentioned that the self-oriented media tend to boost the appearance of self esteem. The Social Comparison Theory also suggests that people tend to possess and innate tendency to evaluate their identity, appearance and beliefs by comparing themselves to others around them, leading to various, often problematic outcomes.

Second theory that will support this research would be the Sociocultural Theory by Lev Vygotsky in which he stressed the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition. Vygotsky strongly adhere that the community plays such a significant role in the process of "making meaning".

This framework posits that social agents such as social media tends to convey solid messages regarding the importance of appearance and the pressure to actually conform into unrealistic body ideals. These messages are then internalized by individuals who adopt societal standards of beauty and slenderness as their own.

The discrepancy perceived between the ideal and one's own body often results in body dissatisfaction. The theory also relates to our research as it talks about the society's importance into developing one person's self esteem and how these different social statuses can either support the growing teen through the spread of body positivity, self love and self acceptance or it will manipulate the teens to submit into their idealistic body looks.

Third theory would be the Objectification Theory formulated by Fredrickson and Roberts, these two women proposed that the socio-cultural factors such as gender roles, to specify, cultural emphasis on women's appearance, the social and economic success connected with achieving an idealized appearance and the objectification of women caused by the media having women think and view themselves as objects to be looked and evaluated by others

Following after, the study of Sheila Ruth t. Madaraog in 2014 titled, "The Impact of Media Beauty Standards on Women Self Esteem" concerns that appearance are severely influenced by what adolescents see via social media.

1.3 Statement of Objectives

1. What are the influences of social media regarding the perceptive of adolescents towards body image?

2. What are the challenges that the adolescents encountered as they undergo the standards of social media in terms of body image?

3. . What are the coping mechanisms of adolescents towards the influence of social media in beauty standards?
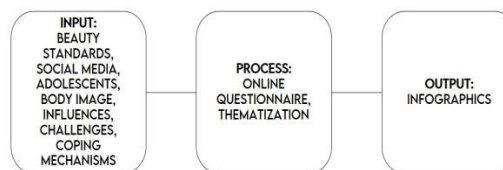
2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This is a qualitative study which made use of descriptive research to gather relevant data to support the study. The qualitative descriptive approach is appropriate for this study because the data collected and used focuses on the participants' subjective experiences and perspectives on how they accept body image of an individual influenced by social media.

2.2 Population and Locale of study

The target population for this research defined to include the students from both

LORMA Junior Highschool and Senior Highschool through the use of Random Stratified Sampling which is where the population is divided into strata (or subgroups) and a random sample is taken from each subgroup. The researchers are planning to have atleast 60 respondents by getting 10 respondents per grade level of 7-12 and ages ranging from 13-18 years old to furthermore amplify and extract specific informations that this research needed. The study will take place at LORMA Basic Education Schools San Juan Campus knowing that the chosen respondents are the adolescents of the highschool department.

2.3 Data Gathering Tool

The data will be gathered through the data gathering instrument of a semi structured interview. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions, it is a method beneficial in steering the direction of the research as a guide and to accumulate the data, despite the current situation of COVID-19, the researchers will be utilizing an online structured questionnaire which would be constructed with the aid of the web application, Google Forms. The online questionnaire would be containing a set of questions relevant to the researchers' study for the respondents to reply and speak their own opinion.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure and Ethical Consideration

To obtain satisfactory answers from the participants, consent and time management are essential in the field of research. The researchers will first require approval from Mrs. Elizabeth R. Camara, school director of LORMA San Juan Campus, and school staff in conducting and developing the said research study. After that, the researchers will ask consent from the participants themselves. The identity of the respondents will be confidential. This is essential to ensure that the respondents are in a comfortable state of mind and are prepared to provide substantial data. After gathering all consent forms and the approval of both the school director and our subject teacher, we would then proceed into sending out the Google Form links for our respondents to answer and us the researchers, will then proceed in analyzing the response that we have gathered from our respondents.

2.5 Data Management

The data that we will be able to compile are going to be sorted out through the use of Thematization. According to Meg Swell, this is the part where the researchers will be able to approach the questions of "why" and "what". The analysis is crucially significant to be clear on its purpose and the topics to be investigated. The "what" of the research would be defined by the statements of the interviewed party knowing that their given data are very substantial into providing contents

regarding body image manipulation of social media. The "why" of the research will eventually be coming from the responses of the participants through their stated experience and perspective towards social media play and body image.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We researchers, were able to gather sufficient data after researching blogs, articles, and past studies shared online about the inclination of teenagers towards their body image.

This chapter represents an analysis and interpretation of all the data obtain and gathered in the study and discussed in-depth exploration of the research problem. Its findings were focused on the data collected from respondents using Random Stratified Sampling. Those data were then sorted then analyzed before being presented, discussed, interpreted, and eventually emerging as themes and serving as an answer to the research problem.

3.1 INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA REGARDING THE PERSPECTIVE OF ADOLESCENTS TOWARDS BODY IMAGE

People are being made to feel insecure by social media in order to fill the resulting gap with the new "self-improvement" products and procedures. This marketing occurs on social media, as individuals promote themselves by posting message and photos that represent them in the best possible photo.

3.1.a Dissatisfaction of Oneself leading to Lack of Self Confidence

Through social media, trends and beauty standards are often posted to be shown to millions of users and amongst them are young adolescents. According to our respondents, seeing trends and unattainable beauty standards on social media had either made them insecure and have lower self-esteem. Along with it, it makes them want to fit into society by conforming into the present beauty standards in order to not feel like the "ugly duckling"

In accordance to this would be the study conducted by, Kleemans, Daalmans, Carbaat, and Anschütz(2016), states that exposure to manipulated photos on social media directly led to low self confidence especially with adolescents as though they have higher social comparison tendencies who were negatively affected by exposure to the manipulated photos.

3.1.b Loss of Unique Identity

Social media had not just influenced our respondent's perception of themselves, but it also influenced them to follow whatever beauty standard or trend they see on social media. According to few of our respondents, social media can make one change themselves, through their appearance by undergoing strict routine

and plastic surgery just so they can fit into the current beauty standard.

Based on the Social Comparison Theory, presented by Leon Festinger, his theory states that people tend to compare themselves to others for them to determine their worth. Thus relating to adolescents comparing themselves to what they see on social media which resulted into them not being able to find their own unique identity.

3.2 CHALLENGES THAT THE ADOLESCENTS ENCOUNTERED AS THEY UNDERGO THE STANDARDS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN TERMS OF BODY IMAGE

Body dissatisfaction and overvaluing body image in defining one's self-worth are risk factors making some people more susceptible. These practices don't usually achieve the desired outcome (physically or emotionally) and can result in intense feelings of disappointment, shame and guilt and, ultimately, increase the risk of developing an eating disorder.

3.2.a. Drastic Increase of Insecurities

The mix of body shaming, high and unrealistic beauty standards and cyber bullying has affected the teenagers by significantly increasing their insecurities. Posts that make one think he or she should have clear skin, a perfect figure, no scars or stretch marks, so on and so forth really

affects how they viewed their own persona.

According to the theory that was proposed by Leon Festinger, which is the Social Comparison Theory, states that people tend to compare themselves around them, leading to various, often problematic outcomes. They tend to set their current physical appearance alongside the 'idealistic' figure that social media tends to predominantly impose amongst their posts.

3.2.b. Conforming into Society's Established Beauty Standards through Cosmetics

The unrealistic standards presented by media has caused people to turn to cosmetics just to be able to 'fit in'. The respondents have been doing various things that weren't part of their routines before. Beauty products, plastic surgery, and other methods of altering one's self is nothing new to them already. For the sake of 'beauty', the respondents are willing to overstep their own personal boundaries and do things that they have never done before.

A study gathered in Cavite, Philippines by Tadena, Kang and Kim(2020) found out that the more adolescents engaged in Social Media activities, the more negativity they encounter about how they and others compare to the "perfect" body images posted on social media platforms. Although adolescents may recognize that the models they see in the media are not realistic role models, peer pressure can

lead them to compare themselves to the images posted on Social Media, leading to negative satisfaction with their own bodies. Peers also play a great role in setting social norms though their views and opinions about body appearance.

3.2.c. Self Worth Assessment

These standards have really affected how people view their selves. Most of the interviewees said that the posts they see on social media make them question their self worth. Social media made them question how they should look, act and interact. Though the media presents content that uplifts people, it is safe to say that posts that raise one's insecurities are still rampant.

Studies have suggested that young men and women have been socialized to believe that appearance is a primary basis for self- evaluation and evaluation by others, and low satisfaction with oneself is often related to low self-esteem. Based from the Sociocultural Theory by Lev Vygotsky, he adheres that the community plays such a significant role in the process of "making meaning". This theory talks about the society's importance into developing one person's self esteem.

3.3 COPING MECHANISMS OF ADOLESCENTS TOWARDS THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN BEAUTY STANDARDS

By far the most important way to improve our self-esteem is acceptance. If you look

in the mirror every day and cultivate a positive body image, you will gain acceptance and trust. This would be beneficial in resolving body image issues.

3.3.a. Social Media Detoxification

Social media has affected the adolescents in how they view themselves by presenting unrealistic beauty images. They're being persuaded by social media to follow the society's absurd beauty standards that led them to be more insecure about themselves. Several of the respondents said that they coped up through refraining themselves from using social media. The respondents imparted that having a break from social media gives them the chance to focus on improving themselves.

Teenagers tend to compare themselves in relation to what they see on social media and going on a digital detoxification refrain them from comparing themselves online and according to an article by Parenta, social media lead us to compare our lives and achievements with everyone else to see how we measure. Scientists have discovered that this constant comparison can lead us to get depression and having a digital detox can allow us to focus on ourselves and reconnect with the things that really make us happy.

3.3.b. Redeeming of Self Worth through Self Reflection

The absurd standard of the society caused the adolescents to lose their self-worth. The respondents answered that they are trying to redeem their self worth as their

coping mechanism. They are taking their time in nurturing themselves as well as slowly learning to embrace their flaws.

Redeeming of Self Worth, according to the American Psychological Association, having high self-esteem is key to positive mental health and well being. Redeeming your self-esteem matters because it helps you develop coping skills, handle adversity and put the negative into perspective.

3.3.c. Seeking Social Interactions with Family and Friends

Seeking social interactions with Family and Friends is one way to cope up for the damage that the society's beauty standards had caused. Most of the respondents commented that interacting with their family and friends helped them to cope up. They said that having to communicate with them eases their mind. Socializing with their friends gives them comfort and helps to overcome their insecurities.

People who spend time with family and friends find healthier ways to cope with stress. A study conducted by Carnegie Mellon University found that people use their family and friends as a stress buffer, talking about their problems instead of seeking negative coping mechanisms such as drinking alcohol, smoking or doing drugs.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We, the researchers, therefore come to the conclusion with given the data we have, that the teenagers get easily persuaded by the beauty standards that the social media has been inflicting upon our current society. These beauty standards heavily affected the way they view themselves as they suddenly felt the need to follow the current beauty trends that they see on social media. The loss of self confidence, value of self worth and an increase of body insecurities are the effects of the drastic amount of time they spend on social media therefore the adolescents are exposed into various unrealistic body images leading them to compare their body towards what they see online. The factors that influence the teenagers to conform into these beauty standards mainly derive from trying to follow the beauty standards set by what they see online for them to be able to fit in and be a part of the current trend.

However, despite of the challenges and influences of social media which regards to the adolescents and their body image, the teenagers also tackled upon slowly distancing themselves into social media for them to be able to learn how to not meet the needs to follow the current trend but to surround themselves with self understanding and their loved ones for them to be able to battle out these insecurities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With utmost consideration with the findings we have gathered, we, the

researchers would like to recommend for the adolescents to not easily get convinced to be someone you're not just for validation from others and at the same time, they should terminate themselves from living up to the ideal look, and everything in between of their demands, expectations and standards just to seek validation and acceptance from society.

The researchers would also like to recommend parents to reassure their growing teens for that physical changes are normal and that everyone develops at different times and rates and be able to encourage their children to be physically active and engage in activities for fun and physical health can help them appreciate what their body can do, rather than focusing on their body's appearance.

On top of that, we would also like to recommend for the future researchers for them to expound these topics further as to properly understand more of the effects of social media towards adolescents of the current generation which regards on how they view themselves and how to be able to help the adolescents to not easily adhere on what the society wants them to be.

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