

Social Media Content and its Effect on Women's Self-Esteem and Body Satisfaction

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Abstract

Previous studies have researched the effects of social media use on various aspects of people's psychological wellbeing. Some have found evidence supporting a link between social media use and a decrease in trait self-esteem, body satisfaction, and depressive symptoms. This study examines the effect of social media content on women's trait self-esteem, state self-esteem, and body satisfaction. The present study will add valuable information by filling in some gaps in the literature, firstly by focusing on the effect media content type has on self-esteem and body satisfaction, which has been understudied and secondly, by examining the effects of viewing overweight models on these variables.

Even more, state self-esteem is studied, where most commonly research focuses on the impact of media exposure on trait self-esteem. A series of questionnaires were used to measure trait self-esteem, state self-esteem, and state body satisfaction, which included the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, State Self-Esteem Scale, and Body Image State Scale, respectively. Participants, recruited from introductory psychology courses at Brandon University, watched a 30-minute video containing buildings (control group), underweight models, or overweight models and then completed the three scales. Three ANOVAs showed that the content type participants were exposed to had no significant effect on their body satisfaction, trait self-esteem, or state self-esteem.

Keywords: self-esteem, body satisfaction, social media

Social Media Content and its Effect on Women's Self-Esteem and Body Satisfaction

Social media is the first type of media that can be actively used by individuals to socialize. Various definitions of social media have been suggested; Carr and Hayes (2015) defined social media as “Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others” (p. 50). Examples of social media include digital platforms with different functions like photo and video sharing, status updates and options to like and comment on posts. Overall, social media is characterized by how users can create and share content.

Social media use is widely spread, StatsCan (2021) reported that 9 in 10 Canadians aged 15-34 regularly use social media. In Canada, females use social media more than males across all ages, and 95.9% of individuals aged 20-24 use social media regularly. Some of the most widely used apps are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram, with 2.7, 2.4, 2, and 1 billion users worldwide, respectively. StatsCan (2021) reported that regularly using more than one account, has a stronger association with outcomes like losing sleep, problems concentrating, engaging in less physical activity, anxiousness or depressive feelings, anger or frustration, and enviousness (Schimmele, Fonberg, & Schellenberg,2021).

Social Media Content

The information conveyed through media is vast and varied. Researchers have been interested in the impact of several types of media content on many distinct aspects of an individual's wellbeing. For example, there has been a lot of focus on the impact the depiction of the thin ideal has on various components of an individual's wellbeing, especially on females.

Media has pushed ideal body types throughout its existence. In fact, we can see how body ideals and beauty standards have changed across decades by looking at different media channels.

Television and cinema have portrayed different body types across decades, depicting what was considered the ideal body type for that time. The ideal body type for females has decreased in size across time (Schick, Rima, & Calabrese, 2011). Media channels have played a significant role in selecting and reinforcing which body type and beauty standard should be followed and strived for by people (Mills, Shannon, & Hogue, 2017). In current society we can still see patterns in television and movies, as well as magazines dedicated to helping people achieve an 'ideal' body type.

With social media came a change, the interaction with media content is more readily available, and individuals themselves have become the subject of conversation, given the ability to post personal content. It has been longstanding that women's ideal body types tend to be slender (Hawkins, Richards, Granley, & Stein, 2004), while men's ideal body types tend to be muscular (Piatkowski, White, Hides & Obst, 2021). It should be noted however, that ideal body types and beauty standards may differ across cultures. For the purpose of the current study, we focus on western societies' ideals. Individuals tend to internalize the content portrayed in media, namely beauty and body ideals (Mingoia, Hutchinson, Wilson, & Gleaves, 2017). The degree of internalization has been associated with various outcomes including lower self-esteem, overall negative mood, and higher levels of body dissatisfaction (Hawkins et al., 2004; Fernandez & Pritchard, 2012; McArdle & Hill, 2009; Hobza, Walker, Yakushko & Peugh, 2007).

Social Media's Effect on Wellbeing

Increased social media use has been associated with negative impacts on users in terms of self-esteem, sleep quality, depression, body dissatisfaction and body image concerns (Rodgers et

al., 2020; Woods & Scott, 2016; Mayer-Brown, Lawless, Fedele, Dumont-Driscoll, & Janicke, 2016). Some negative side-effects of social media use are psychological or physiological, while others are visible via individuals' behaviour. Social media use has been significantly correlated to appearance comparison (Vogel, Rose, Roberts, & Eckles, 2014), body dissatisfaction, dietary restraint (Mayer-Brown et al., 2016), lower self-esteem, and an increase in depression and anxiety symptoms (Woods & Scott, 2016).

Furthermore, social media internalization, defined as the degree to which an individual internalizes media messages (Rousseau, Trekels, Eggermont, 2017), is strongly associated with low self-esteem (Baird, 2006), appearance comparison, and body dissatisfaction (Rodgers, McLean, & Paxton, 2015). In turn, drive for thinness (Fernandez & Pritchard, 2012), a subscale of the EDI (eating disorder inventory) (Eating Disorders Review, 2007), and drive for muscularity, characterized by a person's desire to be muscular in relation to societal pressures (DeBlare & Brewster, 2017), increase with higher social media use (Baird, 2006; Fernandez & Pritchard, 2012) and are strongly related to anxiety, depression, poor sleep quality, as well as lower self-esteem (Woods & Scott, 2016).

Body Image and Body Satisfaction

Body image is the result of four distinct aspects: behavioural body image, perceptual body image, cognitive body image, and affective body image. Behavioural body image refers to behaviours a person partakes in because of their body image for example, dieting. Cognitive body image is what a person thinks about their body for example, "I'm too fat." Affective body image is how a person feels about their body, for instance, dissatisfied. Lastly, perceptual body image is the way a person views their body, which is not necessarily a true representation of what that person looks like. Body image is the combination of these four aspects and it is

influenced by internal and external factors, including images portrayed in the media. Having a positive body image entails acceptance and respect for one's body. Body satisfaction refers to the degree a person is satisfied with their body image. It should be noted that having a positive body image does not necessarily mean a person is satisfied with their body (National Eating Disorders Collaboration, n.d.).

Social media use is also associated with lower body satisfaction. Body dissatisfaction affects males and females differently. In females, body dissatisfaction is primarily related to weight concerns (Oostelbos, 2020). Whereas in males, body dissatisfaction is more complex as it involves both weight concerns and concerns about muscularity (Grossbard, Neighbors, & Larimer, 2011). Females tend to experience higher rates of body dissatisfaction than males (Presnell, Bearman, & Stice, 2004).

More specific findings of the effects social media content have on body satisfaction include findings that early adolescent girls exposed to thin ideals report more body dissatisfaction than girls in non-appearance conditions (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2003). In women, body satisfaction is highest when looking at plus-size models, then average size models, and lastly thin models (Clayton, Ridgway, & Hendrickse, 2017). Viewing thin models decreases body satisfaction, whereas being exposed to images of overweight models increases body satisfaction (Moreno-Dominguez, Servián-Franco, Reyes del Paso, & Cepeda-Benito, 2018). Participants exposed to plus-size models had higher body satisfaction, but a second study found no difference in body satisfaction scores across content type (thin, plus-size, average) (Lou & Tse, 2021).

Self-Esteem

There are diverse ways to differentiate and define self-esteem, such as trait self-esteem which is relatively stable over time, and state self-esteem, which is defined as the day-to-day fluctuations of self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Moreover, there is global and domain-specific self-esteem, the latter being concerned with the appraisal of specific categories such as beauty, sports ability, and intelligence, among others (Reeve, 2018). This type of self-esteem is related to self-schemas, which are domain-specific cognitive generalizations of the self, learned from past experiences. On the other hand, global self-esteem refers to an overall appraisal of our self-concept, which are a person's mental representation of themselves. Our self-concept is a collection of self-schemas, and it is constructed both from experiences as well as the evaluation of those experiences (Reeve, 2018).

Self-esteem has previously been associated with body satisfaction. Crocker and Wolfe (2001) showed that people with contingent self-esteem, that is, unstable, are likely to define their acceptance in social groups as contingent on their perceived ideal body image standards, which as previously mentioned, is impacted by social media standards. Contingent self-esteem has shown to be a risk factor for individuals engaging in social comparisons relating to appearance (Bergstrom, Neighbors, & Lewis, 2003). Moreover, individuals who are concerned with appearance and how peers perceive them, especially females, are more likely to exercise excessively to lose weight (Hausenblas, Brewer, & Van Raalte, 2004).

Theories Relating to Social Media's Effects on Self-Esteem

Participants in different studies often internalize media images (Lee & Lee, 2021), they also report comparing themselves to images on social media (Vogel, et al., 2014). Festinger's social comparison theory states that people compare themselves to others they see as better than themselves, which results in a person's self-evaluation being impacted (Reeve, 2018). Upward

comparisons do not always lead to negative self-evaluations however, this is only the case when the model a person is comparing themselves to is attainable. Given that images of people portrayed on social media tend to be the ideals of society and are normally unattainable due to the use of photoshop and body enhancements/modification, the comparison people engage in tends to lead to body dissatisfaction (Rodgers, McLean, and Paxton, 2015), negative self-evaluations and negative self-perception, potentially contributing to lower levels of self-esteem (Reeve, 2018; Vogel et al., 2014). Moreover, negative social comparison often impacts whatever dimension the person is focusing on. Therefore, if a person is looking at a model they perceive as being more physically attractive than themselves, it is likely that their perceived attractiveness will be negatively impacted (Reeve, 2018).

A different aspect of social media use is selfie posting and editing. The “self-awareness perspective” reasons that viewing the self in selfies would increase self-surveillance and self-awareness with a focus on flaws, which may result in a negative impact on one’s self-esteem. Furthermore, some individuals edit their selfies, which has been positively correlated to facial dissatisfaction and considering cosmetic surgery (Sun, 2021).

According to sociometer theory, self-esteem is mediated by a person’s level of status and acceptance in their social group. As social media is a virtual space where people interact, how others respond to content posted may result in either self-esteem increase or decrease, depending on whether a person received positive feedback (inclusion) or negative feedback (rejection), respectively. Studies have provided both correlational and experimental support for the sociometer theory in relation to social media use, demonstrating that self-esteem is impacted by online approval (Marengo et al., 2021; Meeus, Beullens, & Eggermont, 2019).

Mediating Effects of Self-Esteem on the Relationships Among Social Media and Other Psychological Dimensions

Studies have also looked at how a participant's self-esteem can mediate the effect that social media has on other aspects of their wellbeing. For example, a study demonstrated that self-esteem mediates the negative association between Instagram use and anxiety symptoms in both adult men and women with a mean age of 33 years (Jiang & Ngien, 2020). Additionally, Marengo et al. (2021) found that intensity of positive feedback received on Facebook increased an individual's happiness. Moreover, participants with higher self-esteem had a starker increase in happiness.

Demographics

The impact of social media use on self-esteem has been studied across different demographics. Although there are few studies that show the impact of social media on self-esteem across cultures, there are a few that have been conducted within diverse cultures, like China, India, and European countries. When looking at results from these studies similarities in the effects social media has on self-esteem can be seen.

A study in India showed supporting evidence of excessive social media use being linked to depression and rumination (Mitra & Rangaswamy, 2019). A different study demonstrated a link between excessive social media use and lack of sleep, and that a decline in social media feedback is linked to anxiety and depression (Priyadarshini, Dubey, Kumar, & Jha, 2020). In China, a study showed that self-esteem is negatively correlated with problematic internet use, defined as excessive online activity. Furthermore, a study that examined how WeChat (Chinese social media app) affects self-esteem, found that WeChat use intensity and received likes are

positively associated with self-esteem, whereas frequency of status updates is negatively associated with self-esteem (Wang, Nie, Li, & Zhou, 2018). A different study showed a negative correlation between engaging in appearance comparisons on Facebook and the self-esteem of Spaniard, Austrian, and Belgian participants (Prieler, Choi, & Lee, 2021). Lastly, social media addiction is negatively associated with self-esteem and life satisfaction in university students in Lebanon (Hawi & Samaha, 2017).

The most widely studied category is age related, with a focus on children, adolescents, and young adults. Evidence supports that media consumption has a similar impact on children, adolescents, and young adults' psychological dimensions. A study provides evidence of a significant negative relationship between 6- to 7-year-old girls' self-esteem and watching television shows that emphasized appearance (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006). Another study shows that high global self-esteem in girls offers protection against internalizing media's influence to lose weight, which results in less engagement of unhealthy weight control behaviors (Mayer-Brown et al., 2016). Moreover, appearance self-esteem decreases with more other-oriented social media use in girls aged 10-14 (Steinsbekk et al., 2021). Regarding adolescents, a study showed that social media use was associated with lower self-esteem, anxiety symptoms, poorer sleep quality, and depressive symptoms (Woods & Scott, 2016), which tend to be stronger for girls than boys (Kelly, Zilanawala, Booker, & Sacker, 2018). In addition, appearance comparison was negatively associated with self-esteem (Prieler, Choi, & Lee, 2021).

Although studies look at different dimensions of self-esteem, like global self-esteem, body image self-esteem, appearance self-esteem, among others, evidence generally supports the negative impact social media has on people's psychological wellbeing. Moreover, this finding has been evident across multiple demographics, including children and teenagers (6-18) (Dohnt

& Tiggemann, 2006; Steinsbekk et al., 2021; Woods & Scott, 2016), and across diverse cultures like Eastern, Western and European cultures (Mitra & Rangaswamy, 2019; Wang, Nie, Li, & Zhou, 2018; Woods & Scott, 2016; Prieler, Choi, & Lee, 2021).

COVID-19

In the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns and quarantine periods were common across countries, with some regions implementing curfews, severe restrictions on outings, 14-day quarantines, or a mix of the aforementioned restrictions. During this time, there was a rise in social media use (Wold, 2020). Moreover, a rise in feelings of loneliness (Norbury, 2021) and symptoms of depression and anxiety (Zavlis et al., 2021) were reported since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specifically, a greater number of young adults reported increased social media use, less social support-seeking behaviours, and increased feelings of loneliness (Lisitsa, 2020). Furthermore, increase in self-reported loneliness is more evident in females (Lee, Cadigan, & Rhew, 2020). Another study found that a range of adolescents' psychiatric disorders increased, such as PTSD, depressive and anxiety disorders, and grief-related symptoms also increased (Guessoum et al., 2020).

Bullying and cyberbullying rates also increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially bullying directed at people of east Asian descent. Cyberbullying can occur through social media networks, with the most frequent types of harassment reported being insults and ridicule, social ostracization (blocking, ignoring messages), and negative feedback (making fun of comments, photos, videos student uploaded to social media) (Alsawalqa, 2021). Furthermore, cyberbullying has previously been associated with lower levels of self-esteem in a sample of

university students from Jordan (Alsawalqa, 2021). Overall, social media use has been linked to higher levels of depressive symptoms, anxiety, and lower levels of self-esteem. Considering that it has increased during the pandemic, further examination of the impact of social media use on individuals' wellbeing is necessary.

Current Study

The current study will extend the literature on this important topic of the effects of social media content type on women's self-esteem and body satisfaction by exploring causation with the use of an experimental design. Although there is an extensive amount of research concerned with the impact social media use has on self-esteem and body satisfaction. Most of the research is focused on how length / amount of social media use affects self-esteem or body satisfaction. To a lesser extent research has examined how the type of content individuals interact with affects self-esteem or body satisfaction, which is the focus of the current study. Moreover, within the limited research that does examine content type's effects on self-esteem, typically, the experimental group is only exposed to average weight content. The current study will extend the literature by experimentally examining the effects of exposure to underweight and overweight models on self-esteem and body satisfaction.

In addition, previous research tends to measure self-esteem via the RSES (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale), a measure of trait-global self-esteem, which is stable overtime. The current study will include a measure of state self-esteem, which is more sensitive to day-to-day fluctuations and may therefore show a greater impact from social media exposure. The purpose of the current study is to investigate the differences in women's trait and state self-esteem and body dissatisfaction after viewing either underweight models or overweight models.

Hypotheses

The null hypothesis states that image content will not influence participant's trait self-esteem, state self-esteem, or body satisfaction scores. Moreover, there are two experimental hypotheses for each dependent variable. For trait self-esteem, hypothesis A argues that the experimental group exposed to images of underweight models (BMI<18.5) will have lower trait self-esteem scores than the control group (Fernandez & Pritchard, 2012). Hypothesis B states that images of overweight models will influence participants' trait self-esteem scores and they will differ from the control group (Clay, Vignoles, & Dittmar, 2005).

As for state self-esteem, hypothesis C states that in participants exposed to images of underweight models, state self-esteem scores will be lower than the control group (Rollero, 2013). Whereas hypothesis D assumes state self-esteem scores will be influenced in participants in the overweight group condition, moreover the scores will differ from state self-esteem scores in the control group. Hypothesis E argues that the participant group exposed to images of underweight models will have body satisfaction scores lower than the control group (Moreno-Dominguez et al., 2018). Lastly, hypothesis F states that those exposed to pictures of overweight models will have body satisfaction scores higher than both the control and underweight model (Clayton, Ridgway, & Hendrickse, 2017).

Methods

Participants

Students in introductory psychology courses at Brandon University will be invited to participate. Participants will be recruited based on a script that will be read during their scheduled class time on Zoom and posted on the course's Moodle page, with permission from

the instructor. Students who choose to participate in the study will receive 1% credit towards their final grade. Participants must identify as women, be 18 years of age or older, and Brandon University students.

An a-priori analysis was conducted, and it determined that the total sample size needed to detect a small effect is 246 participants. Parameters entered in G-Power were the following: F tests; ANOVA: Fixed effects, omnibus, one-way; A priori; effect size f:0.20; alpha 0.05; power 0.80; 3 groups. Thirty-seven individuals participated in this study. 78.3% were 18-24 years of age. 59% were Caucasian, 14% were Indigenous, 14% Asian, 8% Black and African, while 5% identified as 'other'.

Design

This study is a between-subject design. The independent variable is the type of social media content. Participants were exposed to one of three types of content, pictures of buildings (control group), underweight BMI (Body Mass Index) models (models whose BMI falls in the underweight category $BMI < 18.5$) or overweight models (models whose BMI falls in the overweight BMI category $24.9 < BMI < 30$). Models' BMIs were calculated manually with the formula $\frac{Weight (kg)}{Height (m)^2}$. The models' height and weight were found through a google search. The dependent variables are trait self-esteem, measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), state self-esteem, measured with the State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES), and body satisfaction, measured by the Body Image State Scale (BISS).

Materials

For this study, the materials used were the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), Body Image State Scale (BISS), State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES), a demographics questionnaire, and 3 videos, each containing either pictures of buildings, underweight or overweight models.

Demographics Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire contained items like What is your ethnicity. What race do you identify as; What is your age? These questions had a select number of responses. This study was open only to those who identify as women. Questions about ethnicity and race are asked as, with enough participants it might be possible to find an interaction with race and/or ethnicity. Lastly, although many university students' ages ranges from 18-25, ages are varied, and it might be possible to find interactions by age.

Trait Self-Esteem

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a measure of trait self-esteem widely used in psychology. It consists of 10 items and has a Likert-type format where participants respond on a scale of 1-5 (strongly agree - strongly disagree). The rating of all 10 items is added and the result is a measure of global self-esteem. Some items are 'On the whole, I am satisfied with myself' and 'I certainly feel useless at times'. The psychometric properties of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale have been reported as internal consistency of 0.77 and test-retest reliability of 0.85 (StatisticsSolution, retrieved 2021).

State Self-Esteem

The State Self-Esteem Scale is a measure of state self-esteem, defined as the temporary changes in people's self-esteem. It consists of 20 items, rated on a five-point Likert scale (not at all – extremely), with 3 factors (performance, social, and appearance). Some items are 'I feel

satisfied with the way my body looks right now' and 'I am dissatisfied with my weight.' This scale has a high degree of internal consistency (0.75), and a test re-test reliability score of 0.90 for the composite scale, and of approximately 0.80 for each of the three subscales (performance, social, and appearance self-esteem scale) (Webster, Howell, & Sheppard, 2022).

Body Satisfaction

Body satisfaction was measured using the Body Image State Scale. This scale is concerned with respondents' current body satisfaction, it consists of 6 items rated on a 9-point Likert scale. One item in this scale pertains to weight (RIGHT NOW... I feel extremely satisfied with my weight – extremely dissatisfied with my weight). Psychometric properties of this scale are good as internal consistency is 0.83, moreover, test-retest reliability was 0.86 (Bardi et al., 2021).

Videos

For this study, the type of content is categorized as underweight BMI (lower than 18.5) and overweight BMI (25-30), it should be noted that since participants are all women, the pictures of models chosen were those of female-presenting models. Moreover, it was expected that many participants would be Caucasian, therefore, most models selected were Caucasian as well. The pictures were selected from a pool of well-known models, each model's BMI was calculated and later assigned to either the underweight or overweight BMI category. There are 15 models in each category, there were 3 pictures of each model with a total of 45 pictures in each video, each picture was presented for 40 seconds, for a total of 30 minutes. To control confounding variables, models are standing in all pictures, wearing similar clothes, and the background was removed.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from Psychology classes at Brandon University. They were provided with a brief description of the study and information on how to express interest and participate during one of their scheduled classes via Zoom, with the instructor's permission. Participants who expressed interest received an email with the consent form document, and a link to a Microsoft Forms document on Brandon University's secure online portal. In this form, participants were asked the demographics questionnaire first, followed by a set of instructions and then a 30-minute video. The instructions were necessary to maximize control of confounding variables. Some of the requirements included: 'watch the video on a laptop, turn on the lights while completing the study, minimize distractions (noise, pets, no food), complete the questionnaires as soon as the video is finished, do not pause the video' etc.

After accommodating the requirements, participants then watched the 30-minute video. Participants were asked to write one or two words that come to mind for each picture on the video; this ensured they were engaging with the material. After the video finished, they completed the three questionnaires that measured state self-esteem, trait self-esteem, and state body satisfaction. The order of these questionnaires was randomized to avoid fatigue and order effects. Overall, the full length of the study should be approximately 45 minutes.

Data Analyses

Three one-way ANOVAs, one for each dependent variable (trait self-esteem, state self-esteem, and state body satisfaction) were conducted.

Results

Descriptive statistics

The study had a total sample size of 37 participants, the experimental group exposed to images of underweight models had 13 respondents, the same as the experimental group exposed to images of overweight models, while the control group had 11 respondents. The majority of respondents were Caucasian and aged between 18 and 24 years.

Three one-way between groups ANOVA were conducted and it showed that there was no significant difference in participant's state self-esteem, trait self-esteem, and body satisfaction scores based on the type of content they were exposed to. The difference in mean and standard deviation scores across groups was small (see Table 1). No post-hoc test was completed as there was no significant main effect. Overall, social media content type did not have a significant effect on participant's trait self-esteem, $F(2, 34) = 0.23, p < 0.8$; state self-esteem, $F(2, 34) = 0.16, p < 0.856$; or on participant's body satisfaction, $F(2, 34) = 0.07, p < 0.937$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effects viewing different types of social media content has on women's wellbeing and self-perception. More specifically the effects viewing underweight and overweight models has on women's trait self-esteem, body satisfaction, and state self-esteem. Given that there is extensive literature supporting a negative association between viewing thin models and women's self-esteem and body satisfaction, it is surprising that no effect was found. Nonetheless, there are some studies that have not found an effect on seeing thin models and participant's self-esteem and body dissatisfaction (Yu & Jung, 2018).

Limitations

One of the limitations in my study is that due to the small sample size it was not possible to detect an effect. Moreover, most participants were Caucasian, therefore a difference in race or ethnicity would not have been possible to identify. Due to an expected small, primarily white Canadian sample size, only western beauty standards were represented in the videos.

Due to being an online study, it was hard to control certain variables, and we relied on participants to follow instructions. Nonetheless, although participants were given a specific and detailed set of instructions, we were unable to check whether those were met or not. One example of this is the average time it took to complete the study, some participants took well over 30 minutes, while some participants took between 6-15 minutes.

Although this study found no significant effect of social media content type on participant's trait and state self-esteem or body satisfaction, these findings are highly limited due to a small sample size, as the a-priori conducted determined a sample of 246 participants was needed to detect a small effect. Furthermore, the findings may have been affected by other factors while participants were watching the video, such as exposure time, although it was expected of participants to watch the full video, not all did.

Future Research

Most of the research on effects of social media use on self-esteem and body satisfaction focuses on women. It has been understudied in other populations like the LGBTQ2+ community, men, older adults, and across races and cultures, other than white/Caucasian and western culture. In the few studies that examine sexual orientation differences, we can see that there are some differences in the way that social media use affects self-esteem. For example, in homosexual men, media influence is more strongly related to self-esteem and body dissatisfaction than in

heterosexual men. Nonetheless, it also showed that social media frequency was not strongly correlated to homosexual or heterosexual men's self-esteem (McArdle & Hill, 2009). Future research should focus on closing the knowledge gap in terms of the effects social media content type (underweight vs. overweight BMI) has on psychological dimensions like self-esteem, and body satisfaction, of varied demographics, like older adults, the LGBTQ2S+ community, and different ethnicities/races, who have been consistently understudied.

There is a clear gap in the literature in relation to race, as very few studies have looked at the impact of social media on self-esteem on different races. Moreover, even though some studies have a mixed selection of participants, most tend to be Caucasian, and few belong to different minority groups, if present, leaving no room to examine interactions by race. Although there are separate studies where participants are from certain regions, few studies have been dedicated to examining the effects of social media use on psychological aspects on participants belonging to multiple nationalities. This information would be significant to further understand how different types of media content affects different races and cultures. A difference can be expected as beauty standards and image ideals may differ by regions and race.

More specifically, there is room to explore how different beauty standards affect multiple ethnicities. For example, it would be interesting to explore how Black American beauty standards affect Black American women, Black African women, and white American women. In terms of how social media content affects the LGBTQ2S+ community, a focus on two-spirited is warranted in Canada. Lastly, there is little literature surrounding effects of social media content on older adults, which is problematic as over 50% of 50-year-olds and older regularly use social media (Schimmele, Fonberg, & Schellenberg, 2021).

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Trait Self-Esteem, State Self-Esteem, and State Body Satisfaction Measures

Scale	Underweight BMI	Overweight BMI	Control
RSE	16.84 (5.12)	16 (6.74)	17.54 (4.76)
BISS	4.96 (1.85)	5.02 (1.90)	4.77 (1.42)
SSES	60.76 (17.10)	59.30 (17.25)	63 (13.54)

Figure 1

Picture of Model with Overweight BMI which Experimental Group 2 was Exposed to.



Figure 2

Picture of Model with Underweight BMI which Experimental Group 1 was Exposed to.



Figure 3

Picture of Building which Control group was Exposed to



Figure 4

Demographics Questionnaire

1) How old are you ?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- Other : _____

2) Please indicate which of the following best describes your ethnic background. Please select all that apply.

- Indigenous (Inuit/ First Nations/ Metis)
- Latin American
- White/Caucasian
- Black
- African
- European
- Caribbean
- East Asian
- Southeast Asian
- Prefer not to say
- Other : _____