# Jurnal EVOLUSI

# THE PRELIMINARY STUDY: BEAUTY STANDARDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND BODY DISSATISFACTION

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## ABSTRACT

The media is responsible for portraying beauty standards that influence both men and women. Social media features depict a double-edged sword that would influence human behaviour in, either way, the positive or negative. Many social media are equipped with various filters to meet the beauty standards as shown in the media. Society members who perceive beauty standards at the extreme level must use a filter before post their pictures online. However, in a real-life, they would spend a fortune on aesthetic correction and gymnasium to meet the beauty standard set by the media. The researcher conducted a pre-test to 100 respondents to ensure the instrument reliability before the actual data collection. The reliability test indicated a value of 0.716 shown that the instrument is reliable for the actual data collection. The item's validity is confirmed via content validity assessment with the content expert. The study also conducted a pre-analysis to determine the possible result for the actual data collection. The pre-analysis finding indicated that internalisation and peer influence are the factors to influence respondents' perceives of body dissatisfaction. The pre-analysis finding is slightly contradicted with suggested hypotheses. Thus, the study expects the for the actual data collection, the finding would show different results from the pre-analysis finding.

## ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:*

Peer Influence,
Social Comparison,
Body Dissatisfaction,
Internalisation,
Social Media

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The body image refers to the behaviour and emotions of individuals towards the respect of their bodies. It can be seen in today's society that most adolescents are chasing the "body goal" type, which can be defined as thin, long legs and for some, natural beauty. Throughout the last decade, Blogs are a popular and influential forum for overweight women in the United States to grow and further build discursive strategies to counter gendered anti-fat discourses developed by the media, legislatures, and the field of medicine and public health institutions (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015).

While in Sweden, mental health problems among young women is the most common problem they are facing today (Bertilsson & Gillberg 2017). Social media influence can lead adolescents to internalize society standards as desirable for themselves, increasing the likelihood that they will suffer from body dissatisfaction (Uchôa et al, 2019).

Social media has been researched and found to be a double-edged sword, influencing human beings. Media are portraying beauty standards that are making women feel dissatisfied with their appearance. It depends on the form of exposure at a much higher degree of impact during adolescence than at any other stage of the human life cycle, regardless of background, influence of friends and self-esteem of a person (Ahmad, Idris, & Jing ,2019). In some countries, the connection between physical self-concept and body image revealed that women's body dissatisfaction has resulted in a rise in eating disorders. (Alipoor, Goodarzi, Nezhad, & Zaheri, 2009). A study shows that 90% of women wished to alter some part of their physical bodies, the most important of which were their body shape and weight. (Etcoff, Orbach, Scott & D'Agostino, 2004; Calogero, Boroughs & Thompson, 2007)

Body dissatisfaction can cause eating disorders to women who are trying to change their appearance in order to look like the portrayed women in social media. According to (Cash and Deagle, 1997) in an extensive meta-analysis, reported that body image dissatisfaction is an important risk factor for the etiology of anorexia nervosa.

This study aims is to identify social comparison, internalization and peer influence affect the perception of their body image through social media and how powerful social media influence to body dissatisfaction of adolescents.

Thus, the problem has been appropriately addressed. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between social comparison, internalization, peer influence and body dissatisfaction.

In a scholarly setting, many studies on body image have been carried out on women. Women attending college are unhappier than teenagers, middle-aged women, and men with their overall appearance and body image. Concerning physical activity patterns among physically active college women, this study is essential in the development of body image and self-esteem. A conceptual framework with an exploratory research design was adopted to achieve a deep understanding of the matter. Social media plays an important role in the self-image of people by informing and reflecting what people think is beautiful or appealing. This journal inspects social media role in the perception of beauty ideal and how those ideals affect the individual behaviour.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL COMPARISON AND BODY DISSATISFACTION

The social comparison process involves comparing themselves with others to evaluate their own attitudes, skills and traits. As a matter of fact, individuals often look to others as comparison standards on how to behave, think, and feel to smoothly coordinate the economic exchange, political action and social relationships (Baldwin and Mussweiler, 2018). There's also some evidence that stories can influence recipients' self-perceptions, motivations, and actions in ways that are consistent to the story and its characters, which is known as assimilation process. (Sestir and Green, 2010; Appel, 2011; Gabriel and Young, 2011; Richter et al., 2014). With close friends, such similarities will be more common, while in more distant relationships, different comparisons will be more common. Close friends should not only be objectively similar, but also want to avoid comparing themselves to other close friends. Thus, the study hypothesised that,

H1: There is a relationship between social comparison and body dissatisfaction.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNALISATION WITH BODY DISSATISFACTION

The internalisation of the feminine beauty image depicted in the media by women was connected to perceptions that beauty would enhance important aspects of everyday life, including happiness, adaptation, social skills, romantic ability, and job opportunity. After the formation of objectification theory, research has shown self-objectification is linked to a slew of physical and mental health hazards in women, including depressive symptoms, sexual and emotional activity problems, and internalising impacts such as negative body image and depression (Tiggeman, 2011). Given that some of these results have a disproportionate impact on women, a thorough understanding on self-objectification might improve the understanding and approach to women's health. As such, this literature review seeks to explore how self-objectification relates to body dissatisfaction.

While some research has found a clear correlation between self-objectification and restrained or disordered eating, it has also been revealed that the link is mediated by internalizing problems such as self - objectification, stress, and appearance anxiety (White, 2013). Therefore, the study created the following hypothesis.

H2: There is a relationship between internalisation and body dissatisfaction.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER INFLUENCE WITH BODY DISSATISFACTION

Peer influence can be defined as a conversation and criticism that links accepting norms and values. Adolescent girls invest more time with their peers and admire their attitudes, values and actions (Tergouw, 2011). Therefore, peers influence most of the choices and acceptances of teenagers towards the body, they can be accepted in a negative or a positive way.

Previous research has discussed that peer influence does correlate to body dissatisfaction. Research shows that the correlation between the perception of their peer's body dissatisfaction by girls and their level of body dissatisfaction. The study results found that the girls are dissatisfied with their body more when their peers are unhappy with their body satisfaction after a regression study was made (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2005; Giles, 2013). Another study found that peer discussions about beauty play a major role in body image problems (Jones et al., 2004; Thompson et al., 2007; Matera, Nerini & Stefanile, 2013). Shroff and Thompson (2006) and Giles (2013) agreed that peer influence is a possible stake factor for body image disturbances, self-esteem and mental ilnesses. Hence, the study considers there is a probable relationship between peer influence and body dissatisfaction and shown below;

H3: There is a relationship between peer influence and body dissatisfaction.

Therefore, the study developed a conceptual framework (refers to figure 1) to help reducing body dissatisfaction among women. The independent variables consist of social comparison, internalisation and peer influence. In contrast, the dependent variable is body dissatisfaction.
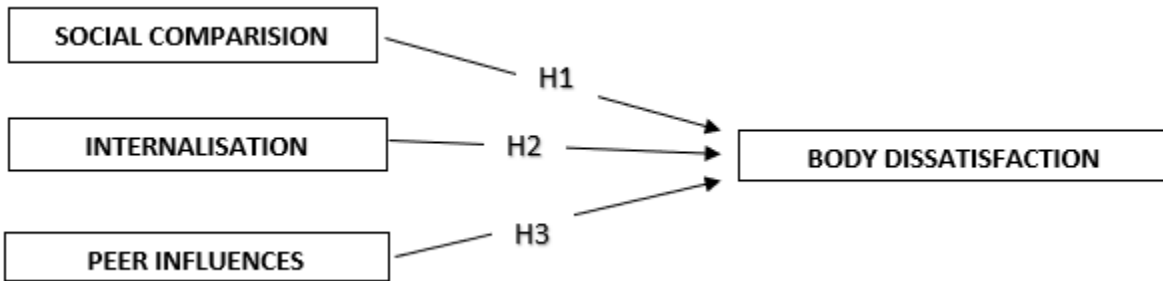
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study used an online survey to collect respondent feedback through a questionnaire in Google form. The questionnaire was easy access for respondents since it used an online approach by clicking a link distributed via WhatsApp.

Female KUPTM KL students were the target respondent of this study. Numerous students from different courses participated in the survey provided. The questionnaire consisted of 40 questions divided into four sections for each variable using the 5-points Likert Scale to record the respondents' feedback starting from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 - strongly agree.

The study used a purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling method can be defined as a type of non-probability sampling that is most effective when it is necessary to study a certain cultural field (Tongco, 2007). In terms of ages, cultures, jobs or life experiences, Homogenous Sampling would be equivalent. The idea is to focus on this exact similarity and how it relates to the subject being studied (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). To access a specific subset of individuals, researchers use this method, as all participants in a study are selected because they fit a specific profile.

Before collecting the data, this study directed a preliminary study to lessen biases and questionnaire validity and reliability issues. Other than that, this study also conducted a content validity test approved by the content expert to make sure all items are valid to be measured by each variable.

The reliability test used the Cronbach Alpha value to measure the consistency of the items for each variable. Cronbach (1951), was created to provide a measure of a scale's or test's internal accuracy, represented as a number between 0 and 1, which is used for items whose responses are on a scale (Quansah, 2017). This study is considered consistent because the reliability test value is 0.716.

A basic statistical analysis was conducted descriptively in the study. The results were presented at frequencies. Also, the study carried out an inferential analysis using a correlation test to test the research hypothesis.

## 4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Table 1: Respondent Demographic

| Measurement | Item | Percentage, % |
|---|---|---|
| Age | 19-22 | 57.4 |
| | 23-26 | 37.6 |
| | 27-30 | 5.0 |
| Course | BK201 | 44.6 |
| | BE203 | 23.8 |
| | AB201 | 6.9 |
| | BE201 | 10.9 |
| | BE101 | 4.0 |
| | CC101 | 3.0 |
| | BK101 | 6.9 |
| How often Internet use per day | 1-3 hours | 6.9 |
| | 3-5 hours | 19.8 |
| | More than 8 hours | 73.3 |
| Weight | 35-45 | 21.8 |
| | 46-55 | 27.7 |
| | 56-65 | 26.8 |
| | 66-75 | 16.8 |
| | 80kg and more | 6.9 |

Table 1 indicates the respondent demographic. The demographic analysis shows 73.3% respondent spend over 8 hours using internet per day while the rest spend less than 5 hours a day by seeing the amount of respondents who spend so many hours using the Internet can actually prove that they are not satisfied with their body as there are many contributions on the social media towards beauty standards. Respondents may feel insecure or uncomfortable seeing the portrayed beauty standard and the more they look into it, the more they will feel affected. This could lead to many dangerous health conditions as respondents feel the need to change their body conditions.

Table 2: Social comparison

| Items | N | Mean | Std Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| (SC10) I think that, when the comparison's goal is self-evaluation, it may be a threat to self-esteem | 101 | 3.95 | .817 |
| (SC8) I think that the social comparison results higher levels of anger and depression | 101 | 3.92 | .966 |
| (SC7) I think that there are negative effects on young women's self-perception of physical attractiveness and self-esteem | 101 | 3.87 | .902 |
| (SC6) I think that individual compares oneself with someone superior to them | 101 | 3.85 | .953 |
| (SC9) I think that as they get older, young women are more likely to engage in social comparison with models presented in advertisements | 101 | 3.76 | .907 |
| (SC3) I think that individuals don't only compare themselves with others who are similar to them | 101 | 3.72 | .850 |
| (SC1) I think that purchasing products will help you to improve shortcomings in physical attractiveness | 101 | 3.68 | .859 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (SC5) I think that adolescent years show a decline in the perception of their attractiveness in line with their increase in age | 101 | 3.59 | .896 |
| (SC4) I think that evaluating your physical appearance is based on what others judge as ideal beauty | 101 | 3.49 | 1.064 |
| (SC2) I think that self-evaluation is based on social comparison with others | 101 | 3.36 | 1.110 |

Social Comparison can be identified as a behavior of oneself that involves comparing that will evaluate the acceptances in their appearance or personality, the respondent agreed that if social comparison is seen as a self-evaluation, it may threat the self-esteem (M=3.95, SD = .817), resulting in depression and increase the level of anger (M=3.92, SD=.966) and also gives negative effects on young women's perception that relates to their body image (M=3.89 SD=.902).

Table 3: Internalisation

| Items | N | Mean | Std Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| (IT4) I believe that women are more concerned than men of their body image and not control their weight | 101 | 3.97 | .854 |
| (IT8) I believe that this matter may result in depression | 101 | 3.92 | .808 |
| (IT6) I believe that this ideal created by society, refers to the observer's perspective of their physical appearance | 101 | 3.89 | 1.009 |
| (IT10) I believe that there are certain degrees of longing among young women to assimilate their appearances | 101 | 3.77 | .760 |
| (IT2) I believe that there is a distinction between internalisation and awareness | 101 | 3.68 | .812 |
| (IT5) I believe, im experiencing a significant increase in body-focused anxiety | 101 | 3.65 | 1.053 |
| (IT9) I believe that the excessive attention towards physical appearance further diminishes the individual's other parts of cognitive and behavioural functioning | 101 | 3.65 | .888 |
| (IT1) I believe in beauty ideals defined by society and took actions to meet these ideals | 101 | 3.46 | 1.171 |
| (IT3) I believe that the level of internalisation can highly predict body image | 101 | 3.45 | .985 |
| (IT7) I believe that the ideals im trying to reach is impossible to achieve | 101 | 3.26 | 1.146 |

Internalization of beauty standards causes people to overestimate the length between their own bodies and the ideal, resulting in body dissatisfaction when the ideal isn't met. The respondent agreed that women are more concerned about their body image compare to men (M=3.97, SD=.854), the respondent also agreed that this may cause depression (M=3.92, SD=808).

Table 4: Peer influence

| Items | N | Mean | Std Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| (PI5) You and your friends always talk about what can you do to look your best | 101 | 3.75 | .984 |

| (PI6) You and your friends talk about how to look attractive | 101 | 3.74 | .945 |
|---|---|---|---|
| (PI3) You and your friends talk about how it is important always to look attractive | 101 | 3.73 | .968 |
| (PI1) You and your friends talk about how your bodies would look in clothes | 101 | 3.70 | 1.063 |
| (PI2) You and your friends talk about what would you like your bodies to look like | 101 | 3.62 | 1.085 |
| (PI4) You and your friends talk about your figures | 101 | 3.57 | 1.089 |
| (PI8) Your friends mention that you should go on diet | 101 | 3.13 | 1.369 |
| (PI7) Your friends mention that you would look better if you were thinner | 101 | 3.07 | 1.366 |
| (PI9) Your friends mention you should build up muscles | 101 | 3.00 | 1.342 |
| (PI10) Your friends mention that you would look better if you had a more muscular build | 101 | 2.64 | 1.262 |

Conversation within peers can influence oneself into evaluating and accepting their body both negative and positive way. The respondent agreed that them and their peers agreed to have common conversation on how to look their best (M=3.75, SD=.984), how to look attractive (M=3.74, SD=.945) and how important it is to always look their best (M=3.73, SD=.968).

Table 5: Body dissatisfaction

| Items | N | Mean | Std Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| (BD1) I think i am satisfied with my face (facial features, complexion) | 101 | 3.36 | 1.188 |
| (BD2) I think I am satisfied with my hair (colour, thickness, texture) | 101 | 3.34 | 1.169 |
| (BD7) I think i am satisfied with my height | 101 | 3.20 | 1.349 |
| (BD5) I think i am satisfied with my upper torso (chest or breast, shoulder, arms) | 101 | 3.13 | 1.101 |
| (BD8) I think i am satisfied with my overall appearance | 101 | 3.08 | 1.197 |
| (BD10) I think i am satisfied when I see myself in the mirror | 101 | 3.00 | 1.200 |
| (BD3) I think I am satisfied with my lower torso (buttocks, hips, thighs, legs) | 101 | 2.93 | 1.134 |
| (BD6) I think i am satisfied with my weight | 101 | 2.91 | 1.305 |
| (BD9) I think i am satisfied with my muscle tone | 101 | 2.83 | .960 |
| (BD4) I think I am satisfied with my mid-torso (waist, stomach) | 101 | 2.70 | 1.145 |

Body Dissatisfaction is a satisfaction of oneself and it is proven that women and men are insecure about their particular body parts. The respondent agreed that they are more satisfied with their facial features, complexion (M=3.36, SD=1.188) and their hair color, thickness and texture (M=3.34,SD=1.169), the respondents also responded that they are mostly unsatisfied with their mid torso such as waist and stomach (M=2.70, SD=1.145)

Table 6: Guildford Rule of Thumb Table

| Value, r | Strength |
|---|---|
| <0.2 | Negligible Relationship |
| 0.2 to 0.4 | Low Relationship |
| 0.4 to 0.7 | Moderate Relationship |
| 0.7 to 0.9 | High Relationship |
| >0.9 | Very High Relationship |

Table 7: The result of the correlation test for the level of Social comparison and Body dissatisfaction

| | | r | *P* < .05 | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Comparison ⟶ | Body Dissatisfaction | .092 | .362 | Not Significant |

The correlation test finding for the level of Social comparison and Body dissatisfaction is shown in table 7. The analysis concludes that H1 is not supported. The relationship between the social comparison and body dissatisfaction is not correlated and shows a low relationship. The direction of the relationships is negative. This can be explained that the respondents do not compare themselves to the point they feel dissatisfied with their bodies. Therefore, other people's attitudes, skills and traits do not involve with social comparison process in KUPTM students.

Table 8: The result of the correlation test for the level of Internalisation and Body dissatisfaction

| | | r | *P* < .05 | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Internalisation ⟶ | Body Dissatisfaction | -.275 | .005 | Significant |

The correlation test finding for the level of internalisation and Body dissatisfaction is shown in table 8. The analysis concludes that H2 is supported. The relationship between internalisation and body dissatisfaction is correlated and shows a moderate relationship. The direction of the relationships is positive. A valid explanation for this is respondents feel dissatisfied with body image because of their own perceptions of not reaching the set beauty standards depicted in social media. Hence, respondents believe that internalisation relates to body dissatisfaction.

Table 9: The result of the correlation test for the level of Peer Influence and Body dissatisfaction

| | | r | *P* < .05 | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Peer Influence ⟶ | Body Dissatisfaction | -.191 | .056 | Significant |

The correlation test finding for the level of peer influence and body dissatisfaction is shown in table 9. The analysis concludes that H3 is not supported. The relationship between peer influence and body dissatisfaction is not correlated and shows a low relationship. This may be because respondents believe body dissatisfactions has no connections with peers. For that reason, peers do not influence most of the choices and acceptances of teenagers towards the body.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

In summary of the obtained result, the study concludes these main points. The results indicate evidence of internalisation and body dissatisfaction. The discussed objectives are to determine social comparison, internalisation and peer influence towards body dissatisfaction.

This study aims to measure respondent's knowledge towards themselves on their emotions and thoughts and its relationship to the level of beauty standards. The method that was used in this study to collect the data information is the survey method in which the questionnaire was created using Google Form. The study used a quantitative research type to analyse the questionnaire that was given to the targeted respondents, where it will be based on the numerical data. The data collection included the process of using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) application in order to get the correct results that can be used to transform to a table format and the analysis of numerical data. This is to build up a relationship of this study easily and to store data.

For future researchers doing a similar study, it is suggested that they widen the demographic section. This will result to a better research outcome. Due to a narrow demographic profile, this study did not fully achieve its hypothesis. Other than that, researchers may focus on feedback from respondents for easy access in answering the questionnaire. Respondent's feedback is very important, and if it is not counted properly, it could affect the overall results. Analysis tools are considered as limitations that researchers face because they use Google Form as a method to distribute questionnaires.

This is happening because respondents tend to not contribute to answering the questions that have been given sincerely. This matter could result of reaching the right amount of target, but not fulfilling the study objectives. Deeper understandings towards this subject are important by browsing all the possible resources to inspect various features related with the chosen title. This way, researchers can decide whether this subject is applicable to all the suggested points above.

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