Navigating Beauty Standards on Social Media: Impact of Appearance Activity on Adolescents' Body Dissatisfaction

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DigiWELL

Background

Appearance activity on social media

Body-ideal images, fitness- and dieting-related posts

Liking, **commenting**, **posting**, **sharing**: own (active) and
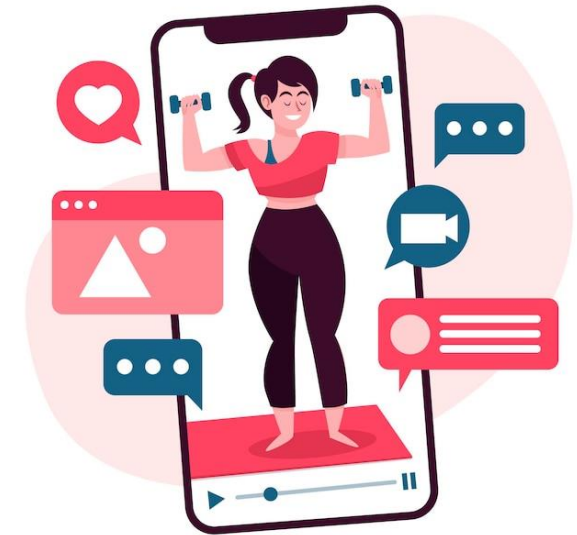 exposure to others' (passive)

Designed by Freepik

Background

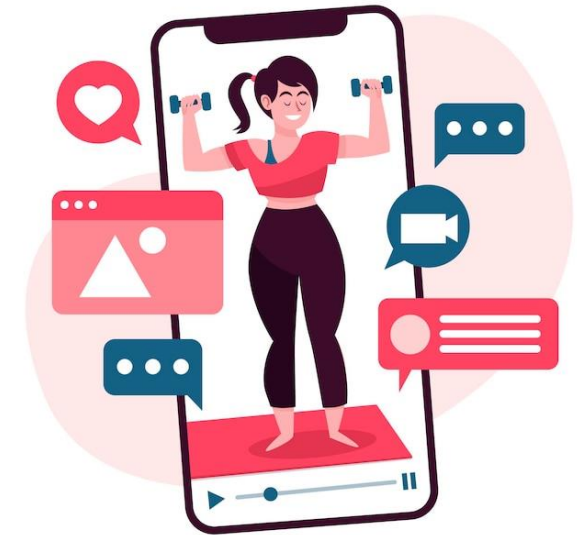**Appearance activity on social media**

Body-ideal images, fitness- and dieting-related posts

Liking, **commenting**, **posting**, **sharing**: own (active) and
 exposure to others' (passive)

Body dissatisfaction

Intensified by appearance activity

Tripartite Influence Model of body image (Thompson et al., 1999)

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Research questions

RQ1: Does **internalization of social media body-ideals** mediate the association between **appearance activity on social media** and **body dissatisfaction**?

RQ2: Does **appearance comparison with social media body-ideals** mediate the association between **appearance activity on social media** and **body dissatisfaction**?

Methodology

Sample

W1: June 2021, **_N_ = 2,500** adolescents aged 11–16 (_M_ = 13.4, _SD_ = 1.7, 50% girls)
W2: December 2021, **_N_ = 1,654**
W3: June 2022, **_N_ = 1,102**

Procedure

Online questionnaire
Data collection with the agency (STEM/MARK)
Preregistered study
As a part of the ‚Modeling the future: Understanding the impact of technology on adolescent's well-being (FUTURE)'

Measures

Appearance activity on social media
Social Media Appearance Preoccupation Scale (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2021). Adapted to „body ideals".

Body dissatisfaction
Eating Disorder Inventory-3 (Garner, 2003). Dissatisfaction with thighs, abdomen, hips, buttocks, and body shape. **ω = .92, .93, .94**.

Social media-ideal internalization
Sociocultural Internalization of Appearance Questionnaire – Adolescents (Keery et al., 2004). Adapted to social media. **ω = .92, .94, .94**.

Appearance comparison with social media ideals
Physical Appearance Comparison Scale-3 (Schaefer & Thompson, 2018). Adapted to social media. **ω = .95, .94, .94**.

Between-person results

Appearance activity with
     social media-ideal internalization (*r = .49, p < .001*)
     appearance comparison (*r = .63, p < .001*)

Body dissatisfaction with
     social media-ideal internalization **(*r = .59, p < .001*)**
     appearance comparison (*r = .35, p < .001*)

Social media- ideal internalization with
     appearance comparison (*r = .79, p < .001*).

Within-person results

	W1 → W2			W2 → W3		
	B	β	*p*	*B*	β	*P*
Body dissatisfaction						
Appearance activity	0.01	.01	.890	0.03	.04	.588
Ideal internalization	0.09	.12	.111	0.13	.17	.091
Appearance comparison	-0.05	-.06	.425	-0.01	-.01	.896
Body dissatisfaction	-0.02	-.02	.865	0.12	.11	.165
Ideal internalization						
Appearance activity	0.05	.04	.418	-0.08	-.07	.230
Ideal internalization	**0.21**	**.21**	**.013**	**0.35**	**.36**	**<.001**
Appearance comparison	-0.03	-.02	.711	-0.02	-.02	.841
Body dissatisfaction	-0.01	-.01	.924	0.05	.04	.566
Appearance comparison						
Appearance activity	0.07	.07	.187	-0.06	-.06	.354
Ideal internalization	0.06	.06	.394	**0.21**	**.24**	**.010**
Appearance comparison	0.04	.04	.568	0.05	.05	.584
Body dissatisfaction	-0.03	-.02	.791	0.06	.05	.486
Appearance activity						
Appearance activity	0.07	.07	.247	-0.02	-.02	.790
Ideal internalization	0.04	.04	.542	**0.19**	**.22**	**.035**
Appearance comparison	0.01	.01	.903	0.02	.02	.793
Body dissatisfaction	0.01	.01	.896	-0.004	-.003	.964

Mediation

Appearance activity (W1) -> social media-ideal internalization (W2) -> body dissatisfaction (W3)

β = .007 [-.01, .03], *B* = 0.006

Appearance activity (W1) -> appearance comparison (W2) -> body dissatisfaction (W3)

β = -.001 [-.02, .02], *B* = -0.001

Conclusions

Appearance activity, **internalization of social media ideals**, **appearance comparison**, and **body dissatisfaction** correlated at the between-person level

At the within-person level, **Tripartite Influence Model** not supported for appearance activity and body dissatisfaction

Desenzitization hypothesis

Insensitive time windows

Specific ideals and appearance-related content: data donation, daily diary studies