



INSTAGRAM USE AND BODY DISSATISFACTION IN ADULT WOMEN

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- Body image - perception of an individual's physical self and the thoughts and feelings that result from that perception
- Body dissatisfaction - a perceptive element of body image measured as a differential between ideal and current body size (Sivert & Sinanovic, 2008)

Body dissatisfaction

- associated with low self-esteem, depression, and eating disturbances in females (e.g. Baily & Riccairdelli, 2010; Fuentes, Longo & Haggard, 2013)
- and
- problematic weight control behaviours including; excessive exercise, fasting, purging and binge eating (Ahern, Bennet, Kelly, & Hetherington, 2011; Harriger & Thompson, 2012; Homan, McHugh, Wells, Watson, & King, 2012)

Body dissatisfaction in women

- Undergraduate females have reported feelings of depression, concerns about their shape, and pressure from the media to conform to standards.
- In an Australian study 74% of women aged 18 to 22 years indicated high levels of body weight concern, whereas only 25% of women in the “healthy weight range” were happy with their weight (Paxton, 2008).
- Reported association between body dissatisfaction and symptoms of disordered eating in undergraduate females. Appearance comparisons, thinness ideal, and peer and media influence were significant predictive factors (Rogers, Charbrol & Paxton, 2011).

Body dissatisfaction in mature women

- While women reported discontent with their bodies across the lifespan, older women reported higher levels of self-worth than their younger counterparts (Tiggemann & Webster, 2003).

- *Socio-cultural theory*
- family, peers, cultural beliefs and attitudes have a tremendous impact on the development of one's identity and self-concept. The dynamic interaction between the individual and society cultivates one's body image (Vygotsky, 1979).
- *Contemporary socio-cultural theory*
- External factors lead individuals to internalize relevant standards of attractiveness. Internalization of the unattainable thin ideal is thought to lead to body image disturbance, which in turn is a high risk factor for eating dysfunction (Schaefer et al., 2015).

- *Tripartite influence model* - three significant sociocultural influence variables (media, peers and family), which impact body image and eating disturbances (Keery, van den Berg & Thompson, 2004).

Self-presentation theory (Goffman, 1959)

- Emphasizes the role of sociocultural interaction and the individual's need for acceptance and approval within society
- Highlights the importance of external social influence on social acceptance and development of body image

Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954)

- Individuals evaluate their self-opinions and abilities by comparing themselves to others to reduce uncertainty in these domains.
- The more attractive an individual perceives a group of other individuals to be, the more important those people will be as a comparison standard for that person.

Theoretical support for Tripartite model

- For both young males and females, parents had the greatest influence on body image, more so than peers or media. Parental messages regarding body image were strategies to increase muscle for boys and maternal encouragement to lose weight for girls (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2005).
- Negative insinuations about a daughters' body shape, thin-ideal internalization, and awareness of maternal dieting were found to have a negative impact on a daughters' body image (Cooley, Toray, Wang, & Valdez, 2008).
- Mother and father criticism did not influence participant's body dissatisfaction but media influences showed a strong correlation (Hardit & Hannum, 2012).
- Study with 188 young adult females found only media and peer influence were significant predictors of body dissatisfaction but not parental influence (Rogers, Chabrol & Paxton, 2011) .

- Internalization of the thin ideal not only a key factor but also a mediator of body dissatisfaction (Bamford & Halliwell, 2009; Cafri, Yammamiya, Brannick & Thompson, 2005; Slevec & Tiggemann, 2011)

Support for self-presentation theory

- Sanderson and Smith (2015) used self-presentation theory to determine how athletes use a visual social media site for self-presentation.
- Participants were more likely to post images that represented their 'athlete' stereotype.
- Athletes' choice of images were strongly influenced by media pressures to fulfil the societal stereotype

Support for Social Comparison theory

- Women who use inappropriate targets to self-compare, are more vulnerable to sociocultural appearance pressure (Bamford & Halliwell, 2009; Wood, 1996).
- The amount of time spent socially comparing with attractive peers and models were significant predictors of body dissatisfaction, weight anxiety and eating disorders (Tiggemann & McGill, 2004).

Media and internalization of the thin ideal

- Thin-ideal internalization is the extent to which an individual cognitively validates the desirability of a thin body and adopts thinness as their own personal ideal. Internalization is the cognitive endorsement of the cultural ideal of attractiveness (Homan et al., 2010).
- Exposure to media images of thin ideals increases women's negative feelings about their bodies, especially when thinness is highly desirable in that culture (Pritchard & Cramblitt, 2014).
- Study by Heignberg and Thompson (1995) revealed female participants became immediately depressed after watching a television commercial that presented societal ideals of thinness and attractiveness.

Media, thin internalization and body dissatisfaction

- Women reported poor body satisfaction following exposure to images of fashion models compared to neutral images (Posovac, Posovac & Posovac, 1998), and exposure to images of 'idealized' females (Durkin & Paxton, 2002).
- These findings were also confirmed in studies where women were exposed to television advertisements and popular female magazines (Patrick, Neighbors, & Knee, 2004; Selevic & Tiggemann, 2011; Tiggemann & Miller, 2010).
- Women who reported high on thin internalization, had positive body image, and rated appearance as not important were exposed to advertisements of ultra-thin models. No negative psychological effects or body dissatisfaction was found (Halliwell, 2013).
- Possessing a positive body image and placing less importance on appearance may protect women from negative media messages (Grogan, 2010).

Social media and body dissatisfaction

- Women who witnessed fat talk on Facebook, whether the content was negative or positive reported an increase in body dissatisfaction (Lee, Tangichi, Modica & Park, 2013).
- Frequent engagement in fat talk on Facebook led to negative self-consciousness for the individual, including increased levels of depression (Arroyo & Harwood, 2012).
- Facebook users scored significantly higher on all indicators of body image concern including body dissatisfaction, than those who did not use Facebook (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014).

Hypothesis

- Women who spend more time on Instagram will have higher body dissatisfaction mediated by internalization of the thin ideal.

- 108 female participants who reported using Instagram
- Mean age 28.8 years (sd=1.09)

Measures

- Thin internalization, athletic internalization and media influence subscales from the Sociocultural Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ-4) of Thompson et al. (2011)
- Weight Concern and Sexual Attractiveness scales (Cragun, DeBate, Ata & Thompson, 2013)
- The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
- *Body dissatisfaction*. The scale is composed of nine female figures numbered 1-9, which progressively increase in size from very thin to overweight (1 = very thin, 9 = overweight). Discrepancy between ideal body size and current body size indicates level of body dissatisfaction (Stunkard, Sorensen & Schulsinger, 1983).
- BMI

Results

Table 1
Correlations between key variables for Instagram Users (n=108)

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Time on Instagram	.243*	.094	.051	.083	-.073	-.080	-.018
2. Body Dissatisfaction		.325**	.313**	.145	.408**	-.283**	-.017
3.Media Influence			.426**	.106	.519**	-.283	-.053
4.Thin Internalization				.433**	.450**	-.296**	-.092
5.Athletic Internalization						-.101	-.111
6.Weight Concern						-.423**	.029
7.Sexual Attractiveness							.046
8. Self-esteem							-

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Multiple regression results predicting body dissatisfaction in Instagram users (n=108)

Table 2

	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i> [95%CI]	Beta	<i>p</i>
Time on Instagram*	.008	.003, .014	.259	.003
Thin Internalization	.005	-.055, .101	.012	.554
Media Influence	.021	-.050, .089	.065	.586
Weight Concern*	.053	.011, .097	.285	.015
Sexual Attractiveness	-.35	-.082, .017	-.137	.193
Self-esteem	.002	-.081, .086	.003	.956

Note. The dependent variable was body dissatisfaction. $R^2=.249$, Adjusted $R^2=.203$. * $p<.05$

Table 3

Regression predicting body dissatisfaction in total sample (n=197)

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i> [95%CI]	Beta	<i>p</i>
Body Mass Index	.369	.264, .474	.413	.000
Weight Concern	.035	.009, .061	.195	.009
Sexual Attractiveness	-.046	-.075, -.018	-.199	.001
Media Influence	.052	.010, .094	.158	.016

Note. The dependent variable was body dissatisfaction. $R^2=.455$, Adjusted $R^2=.443$.

* $p<.05$

- Body dissatisfaction was associated with time spent on Instagram however thin internalization did not mediate the relationship
- Social media such as Instagram is a potential source of appearance ideals for adult women ie a platform for accessing ideal appearance related content including pictures of celebrities and models

- In previous research (Tiggemann & Slater, 2013; 2014) time spent on social media was strongly correlated with thin internalization however no such relationship was found in this study
- Average time spent on Instagram was 34 min in this study compared to 1.5 hours in the Tiggemann studies
- Posts on Instagram from family and peers are more likely to represent normal women who are not idealized, glamorized nor portray extreme thinness
- Internalization of the thin ideal is possibly more evident in adolescence and early adulthood. Participants in this study were older which may account for the lack of a mediation effect of thin internalization.

Conclusion

- Use of Social media like Instagram can expose women to images of others which may then cause body dissatisfaction through social comparisons. This appears to be independent of whether women consider thinness to be the ideal and have internalized this ideal.
- These findings need to be replicated in future research with different age groups and with male samples

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Thank You

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