PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BODY STANDARDS OF YOUTH IN DUBAI

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Abstract

Due to increased social media usage among young people, there is a higher probability of certain digital interactions leading to risky behaviors among younger individuals. This study aims at investigating the negative psychological impact social media can have on the youth's body standards and to better understand the correlation between social media and body standards. An online self-administered survey was used as a data collection instrument among 150 participants in Dubai through a systematic random sampling technique. SPSS program was used for the detailed analysis of gathered data. Based on findings, the study concluded that there is a strong correlation between social media and body standards, with the psychological impact of social media upon body standards of the youth being highly negative. Evidence also proved that this negative psychological influence may manifest itself in the form of harmful behaviors.

Keywords: Body Standards, Social Media, Youth, Dubai.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Social media use has increased dramatically in the last decade, dominating a significant portion of our perceptions and time. (MONICA ANDERSON AND JINGJING JIANG, 2018) Adolescents today would be the first generation to grow up in a completely digital world. WHO (World Health Organization) defines 'Adolescents' as individuals in the 10-19 years age group and 'Youth' as the 15-24 year age group.(Adolescent Health, 2020). Data suggest that 97% of US adolescents report using at least one social media platform (MONICA ANDERSON AND JINGJING JIANG, 2018). Adolescence is considered to be a period of vulnerability. Hence, adolescent years play a crucial role in shaping individuals that have long-lasting impact and consequences.(Stephanie Burnett Heyes, 2010). Peers play a very important role during puberty, when there is a lot of pressure to adapt and fit in with your peers. (Nesi et al., 2018). Adolescents are particularly sensitive to interpersonal and social self-evaluations, and how they are viewed by others is extremely critical.(Nesi et al., 2018). Certain digital interactions can influence peers to develop positive or negative behaviors, which in turn may lead to risky behaviors as well. This is a pressing public concern, because teen years are a time where probability of risk-taking is more heightened relative to childhood.(Sherman et al., 2018).

Body image is described as one's subjective thoughts along with feelings of one's appearance.(Grogan, 2016). Body satisfaction is a component of body image that predominantly indicates contentment with one's physical appearance. While most research is focused on the connection between social media and body dissatisfaction, we'll use the term body satisfaction to prevent misunderstandings with the other construct of interest, well-being. (Perloff, 2014). According to studies, regular social media users are at risk of lower body satisfaction because social media usually provides looks-focused content, with users frequently presenting an idealized version of their appearance and life that is hard to emulate. (Perloff, 2014). According to studies, social media presents glamorous and ostentatious lifestyle, its impersonation of which is hard to achieve by normal people leading normal life. (Perloff, 2014).

Many socio-cultural, biological, and interpersonal factors affect body dissatisfaction with gender, according to studies conducted in Western countries. Thinness is seen as socially unacceptable in Arab culture, while plumpness is seen as a sign of fertility and womanhood. (Musaiger et al., 2012). Nevertheless, over the last three decades, the oil-rich Arab world has emerged as a power to be reckoned with and with that being said, United Arab Emirates is one of the Gulf countries. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has experienced strong and comprehensive economic growth as well as social and cultural modernization. These had led in a clash of cultures, and research show that a clash between a traditional culture and an adopted culture may increase the likelihood of eating and body image issues in vulnerable people.(Tsai et al., 2003).

The media, friends, and family, according to the Sociocultural Model, are essential vessels by which messages regarding weight and looks are conveyed to society's members. The Sociocultural Model indicates that BI (Body Image) disturbances in females are the product of widespread social pressure to be slim and lose weight, while the ideal body for males is tall, bulky, and mesomorph. (Santarossa & Woodruff, 2017). Social networking sites can be especially effective transmitters of messages regarding weight and looks, according to the Sociocultural Model's constructs (media, peers, and family). This is due to the fact that users can communicate with their friends/peers, families, and members of the media (celebrities, athletes, etc.), all of which can affect social expectations and virtually promote beauty norms, that could lead to body dissatisfaction. Previous research of adolescents has found a connection between online friend interactions and BI.(Tiggemann & Slater, 2013). Tiggemann and Slater (2013) discovered that the number of Facebook friends has to be directly associated with every BI concern variable, such as internalization, body surveillance, and strive for thinness.

Researchers have found evidence to suggest that high exposure to social media may result in eating disorders and higher rates of body dissatisfaction, through mechanisms of self-objectification and physical appearance comparisons. Contextually, maladaptive usage of social media would involve continuous user engagement in such mechanisms leading to body dissatisfaction and development of eating disorder. For instance, a user may compare themselves to depictions of very thin or muscular bodies. This imagery and depiction may also be referred to as 'thinspiration' or 'fitspiration' by researchers. Due to easy access and constant availability, heightened peer comparison, social media's effects on mental health might be more powerful compared to that of media forms like magazines and television. (Griffiths et al., 2018).

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

From the examination of previous studies related to this subject matter, it is observed that there is significant data for the category of 'adolescents', but also a lack of data when it comes to the category of the 'Youth' of Dubai, UAE.

This research is a quantitative study that aims to explore the psychological impact that social media has on the current body standards of the youth of Dubai.

Analyzing this data for the youth is essential; because studies show that the human brain does

not fully mature until the age of 25. (Stephanie Burnett Heyes, 2010). Scientists have also recognized that many mental disorders tend to run within families as well, meaning that acquired mental illnesses may be passed down to future generations.(Smoller et al., 2013) Overall environmental factors, such as exposure to emotional harm or mentally ill individuals may also contribute to development of mental disorders among young people.(Inheriting Mental Disorders., 2015). In regards to work opportunities and social interactions, people with the 'ideal' body image are prioritized when choosing work partners and have a higher hiring potential, leading to lower self-esteem as well as higher unemployment rates among individuals with an unideal body image.(Lennon et al., 1999).

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

People's views of how their image compares to that of others are a crucial factor in evaluating their dissatisfaction with their own bodies (Kim & Chock, 2015). In the twenty-first century, during which social media is readily available to people of all ages and backgrounds, there is a strong focus on idealized body, skin, and type. Body Shaming is a type of bullying which focuses on a person's physical features. Body Shaming is becoming increasingly common among young adults, as celebrities promote diets, fitness, and fashion trends, and those who deviate from such trends are chastised or embarrassed (Jain et al., 2020). Individuals are prone to compare themselves to those who are considered to be better off, as Festinger (1954) stated about the upward social comparison.

Poetics on social media occur when individuals in online communities make use of essentializing tactics for the purpose of shaming each other and by doing so, they build themselves and the things they condemn. Hashtags, memes and other types of posts that have a particular visual power of encapsulation and also cause segregation in degrading, highly compelling ways to shame people. The forming of online communities of oppositional nature whose identity is primarily, if not entirely, based on validating the same opponent that is wished to be delegitimized

is linked to the propagation of signs as well as symbols over online platforms. The "at- least-we-are-not-them" mentality sustains both the "we" and the "them," which is a clear indication of polarization between entities, though it is usually not common for any of the users exhibiting polarized nature to confess to any of their roles in this sustenance (Shenton, 2020).

Contrary to popular belief, body shaming is not only limited to weight, body shape and size (fat shaming or skinny shaming), but it encompasses all physical features of an individual that are visible to others such as those of skin, skin color, height, hairstyle, clothing choices, make-up and overall appearance (Gani & Jalal, 2020; Jain et al., 2020).

TYPES OF BODY SHAMING

According to the research done by Tan (2019), body shaming can be classified into 3 categories along with their variations/sub- patterns depending on the nature and direction of remarks:
Self-deprecation
Other-deprecation
Self-realization

SELF-DEPRECATION

Pattern 1: Deprecation of self alone. In connection with social media, self-deprecation can refer to when users are found to exhibit either direct or indirect disapproval of them. Instances involving indirect disapproval may be seen in the form of sarcasm, which may resonate with people or is reminiscent of the remarks other people may have made offline about the user or other people like the user, and can serve to be a tool of self-deprecation in a way that lightens face or waters down any negative comments whatsoever that other people may potentially post in response to a particular person's picture on social media.

Pattern 2: Deprecation of self + other/s (in-group). Another sub-category of self-deprecation involves deprecation of oneself as well as other people at the same time, typically people who are a member of a user's in-group, like family or friends. Instances of generalization can be considered a part of this sub-category as well.

OTHER-DEPRECATION

Pattern 1: Deprecation of others alone. This

type of body shaming involves targeting other people for the sole purpose of humiliating and insulting them. Sarcasm may be involved in such remarks.

Pattern 2: Comparison of target to another person: This sub-category of other-deprecation involves the comparison of a particular target to another person or group of people. A mixture of positive and negative emotivities may also be utilized by people as a defensive strategy to save them and to lighten the bite of the insult.

Pattern 3: Usage of metaphors: A popular pattern of deprecation used on social media involves the application of metaphors to a target. In popular culture, food and animal metaphors are widely utilized as a tool of deprecation. Choices of metaphors are usually influenced by socio-cultural beliefs.

SELF-REALIZATION:

Pattern 1: Self-realization + other/s (in-group). This subcategory is a rather different form of body shaming where certain parts and attributes of the body are pointed out, although degradation may or may not necessarily be a function in this case and may also be of neutral nature or a source of motivation depending on how it is perceived by people.

Pattern 2: Self-realization alone: This is similar in nature to the previous point, except that no one else other than one particular user is implicated by other people.

GENDER DIFFERENCES INSIDE OF BODY STANDARDS

People today are blaming both males and females about their body types. According to one statistical study, it was observed that women were discursively shamed for their appearance 32.7% more than men. Women are objectified more often than men, and hence the gender relationship becomes unbalanced (Oostendorp & Roodt, 2015). Tiggemann & Miller (2010) analyzed the bond which is in between total Internet penetration along with teenage girls' body image issues. The researchers discovered that increased Internet access was associated with higher body image issues, like weight dissatisfaction and the yearning to be thin. Some researchers have viewed on the effects of visiting body-image-related websites, especially pro-ana (pro-anorexia) sites. (Bardone-Cone & Cass, 2006; Rouleau & Von Ranson, 2011). In such studies it was discovered that using pro-ana websites resulted in negative psychological as well as affective outcomes, such as decreased self-esteem, negative feelings, having a feeling of being overweight, along with that, having increasing symptoms of eating disorders (Kim & Chock, 2015).

From the researches it was also found that this propensity for portraying an idealized body image isn't really limited to women (Manago et al., 2008). Men also invest a great deal of work into presenting themselves in their online profiles in the best possible light (Manago et al., 2008). Men view their body in terms of muscularity, lean structure, hair and torso rather than looking at it from a holistic perspective and this desirability of a muscular structure can be seen in many men. Men's self-esteem is also found to be correlated with their features comprehending to face, hair and muscularity (McFarland & Petrie, 2012). Hence men also experience body shaming if they aren't muscular enough like the idealized examples of men with 'Perfect Bodies'. (Jain et al., 2020).

CONSEQUENCES OF BODY SHAMING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS HEALTH ISSUES

Body shaming has been linked to the victim's physical degradation as a result of unhealthy eating activity in order to achieve the ideal body. According to psychological literature, victims' psychological symptoms include depression, anxiety, eating disorders, subclinical sociopathy, and low self-esteem. A number of teenagers have lost self-confidence as a result of shifts in body form (Gani & Jalal, 2020). When assessing gender differences in this regard, it was found that women who identify their bodies as deviant from the "standards" will most probably engage in disorderly habits of eating (Bento et al., 2017). Men who have negative feelings about their physical appearance, height, and features, on the other hand, are more likely to have negative feelings about their bodies and participate in dysfunctional behaviors to cope with them. Regulating one's feelings appears critical because,

if done incorrectly, it can lead to maladaptive and unhealthy eating habits (Jain et al., 2020).

This idea of discrepancy leads to women being cognitively inclined to react to internal negative and unwanted experiences, for instance, eating less in order to become thin (Bento, Ferreira, Mendes and Marta Simōes, 2017). Similarly, men who experience unwanted emotions regarding their body shape, size and features of it, often indulge in negative evaluations and having familiarity of dissatisfaction with one's bodies; and engross in dysfunctional behaviors to cope with it. Regulating one's emotions thus becomes very important as if not done correctly, it also leads to maladaptive and harmful eating patterns (Lavender and Anderson, 2009). (Jain et al., 2020).

PROPAGATION OF STANDARDS THROUGH DIGITAL MANIPULATION

Social media's interactive features enable users to selectively portray physical images of themselves but may also increase the subjective norms to do otherwise. Users are more likely to display idealized representations of their physical appearance on their profiles as a result of this (Kim & Chock, 2015). Taking and altering selfies on social media, as well as tracking likes and comments, can reflect body image behavior patterns that people with eating disorders exhibit in offline settings. Body checking (namely the, obsessive examination of short comings in appearance or regions of devaluation) along with that also avoidance (– for example, ignoring one's own reflection) are two common eating disorder-maintaining behaviors which may extend in online via intensive selfie scanning and selecting or avoiding of uploading selfies (and "untagging") (Murphy et al., 2010). Keeping record of likes or comments on posted selfies could be a form of online constant validation (Chua & Chang, 2016). Lastly, body image problems are maintained by obsessive appearance-fixing along with masking (Mitchison et al., 2013) may even be reflected in the need to digitally manipulate selfies before posting them on social networking sites (Lonergan et al., 2020). From the McLean et al. (2015).'s results, in a survey study, people who experienced significant photograph investment and manipulation also reported increased bulimic somatic symptoms (Cohen et al., 2018). However other study results showed that due to the estimation of interest in others' feedback; for example, the effort involved in selecting a selfie for uploading on social media which could click a separate mechanism of psychology beyond simply tracking likes/comments (Lonergan et al., 2020).

TARGETING CELEBRITIES

It is important to remember that, in contrast to the idealized representations of celebrities, models and public figures portrayed in conventional media sources, media platforms users tend to be part of peer groups. Users' satisfaction of body image can also be influenced by in-group members or those who are viewed as peers (Jones, 2001; Gillen et al., 2006). According to research, peers are more likely than media models to be the subject of social comparisons based on appearance. If there is comparison of young adults to media or even peers, the association among comparison of overall appearance and dissatisfaction of body image tends to be the just the same (Jones, 2001).

Many researchers have looked at the relationship between body image and media using Festinger (1954) social comparison theory. Since such kind of images on media (e.g., slim or bulky models) appear to represent "the idealized representations of physical beauty," previous studies has shown that forming associations with modern media can be substantially related to upward social comparisons (Kim & Chock, 2015). People are less likely to be pleased with their own looks if they keep equating themselves to these "ideals." People who are more likely to participate in this phase of comparison of overall appearance are significantly more likely to be swayed by media photos, according to a variety of studies. (e.g. Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). As a result, the connection between media representation and body image problems is mediated by appearance contrast (Kim & Chock, 2015).

According to a study carried out by Ravary et al., (2019), certain instances of public body-shaming were observed among celebrities as well, hence acknowledging the fact that celebrities,

despite being the trend-setters and propagators of ideal body image, can be victims of body-shaming as well. The following Table 1 below depicts a compilation of such instances.

Table 1 : Celebrity instances of body shaming as identified by Ravary et al., (2019)

Event	Date	Celebrity	Incident
1	January 7, 2013	Lena Dunham	Howard Stern, a radio personality and host, referred to the Girls Star as a "little fat chick".
2	January 25, 2009	Jessica Simpson	She was faced with criticism in terms of weight after she was seen wearing a pair of "mom jeans" at her performance.
3	March 10, 2013	Kourtney Kardashian	The socialite was told by her husband Scott Disick publicly about the need to lose her baby weight faster on their reality TV show.
4	February 6, 2012	Adele	Karl Lagerfeld, the renowned Chanel designer, stated in a newspaper article that the singer was apparently a 'little too fat".
5	January 12, 2014	Gabourey Sidibe	The actress faced criticism in the form of being fat-shamed for her body weight as well as her choice of dressing at the Golden Globes.
6	March 8, 2010	Gabourey Sidibe	The actress was referred to as an "enormously fat black chick" by radio personality and host, Howard Stern.
7	March 25, 2014	Lena Dunham	She was accused of sending out a message by the late actress and comedian Joan Rivers, saying "It's okay. Stay fat. Get diabetes."
8	July 12, 2015	Demi Lovato	The singer was faced with a flood of several fat-shaming comments after posting a picture on Instagram.
9	April 22, 2013	Kelsey Williams	Fans were asked by the Houston blogger Claire Crawford to vote on whether his Oklahoma City cheerleader was fat.
10	December 6, 2013	Alyssa Milano	Actor Jay Mohr critiqued her for her post-baby weight during a radio interview.

Source: (Ravary et al., 2019)

HYPOTHESIS

Following are the hypotheses formulated for this study:

Significant social media impact on people's daily lives which imply that social media can also influence the way people wish for their appearance to be. Body image is also considered a part of overall

appearance, and hence, this can also be influenced by social media. Such body standards can then propagate through the society via social media. Formally:

H1: There is a significant relationship between social media and body standards. Ho1: There is no significant relationship between social media and body standards.

As per previous studies and observations, social media has widely affected the mental as well as physiological health of individuals by the propagation of certain body standards. These body standards are labelled as being idealistic by the society. This can also include unrealistic body standards which are unreal due to the fact that they are propagated through digitally manipulated images. Thus:

H2- There is significant negative psychological impact of social media on body standards. Ho2- There is no significant negative psychological impact of social media on body standards.

Many psychological disorders manifest themselves in the form of abnormal behavior and physiological disorders as well. Insecurity caused by propagation of ideal body standards through social media can potentially serve as the basis of developing such disorders, for instance self-esteem issues and eating disorders. Social media can also refer to as a platform of public figures exhibiting such standards. This will cause individuals to put them at a serious risk of potentially harming themselves. As a result, we, posit:

H3: There is a significant relationship between social media and harmful practices involving attempts of achievement of the ideal body type.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between social media and harmful practices involving attempts of achievement of the ideal body type.

III.   PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research article focuses on proving the relation between body standards and social media as well as evaluating the psychological impact of this relationship on citizens and residents of Dubai aged 15-24 years old. People are overly focused on getting opinions of people to the point that their opinions severely affect them and therefore they digitally manipulate their photographs just to look like the idealized version that is being displayed. This is causing serious physiological effects which manifest themselves in the form of mental illnesses and physiological disorders. This study will investigate the factors causing these serious physiological problems.

IV.   METHODOLOGY

A digital survey-based quantitative study was framed using Google Forms consisting of 17 questions. This was done to prove the existence of the social media-body standards relationship, and to investigate what psychological impact it had on the youth of Dubai. The participants involved in this study were either residents or citizens of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, ranging within 15-24 years of age. Individuals taking part in this study were chosen by method of systematic random sampling.

In accordance with ethical research guidelines issued by APA (2003), the consent of partaking individuals was obtained prior to taking the survey, ensuring the confidentiality of their responses. The survey covered details about the gender, age, social media- related activities, perceptions of body image, and opinion on the overall impact of the social media-body standards relationship. Respondents were also presented with certain statements as Likert's scale questions.

The population of Dubai is approximately 3.4 million as of September 2020. (DSC, 2021) Out of this, individuals aged 15-24 years are estimated to be around 1.21 million. (UAE Population Statistics 2021 (Infographics) | GMI, 2021). A total of 150 individuals i.e. 0.021% of the total sample population answered the survey and the responses were checked for accuracy before proceeding with the data analysis phase. SPSS program version 22 was used for the statistical analysis of the gathered data. List tables and crosstabs were used to depict the responses to different questions and to establish comparisons between variables involved.

V.   RESULTS

Table 2 depicts the demographic data of participants involved in this study. Out of 150 respondents, 39 (26%) were males and 111 (74%) were females. At 62%, majority of participants belonged to the age category of 19-21 years.

Table 2: Demographic data of participants.

Variables		Age			Total
		15-18	19-21	22-24	
Gender	Female	15	77	19	111 (74%)
	Male	3	16	20	39 (26%)
Total		18	93	39	150 (100%)

Table 3 represents data about daily usage periods of social media among participants. Most participants (43.3%) responded that they used social media for around 4-6 hours daily, followed by 26% of individuals for 1-3-hour time-period, and only one respondent claiming not being a user.

Table 3: Daily social media usage periods.

Time Period		Frequency	Percent
How much time do you spend daily on social media?	1-3 hours	39	26.0
	10+ hours	14	9.3
	4-6 hours	65	43.3
	7-9 hours	31	20.7
	I do not use social media	1	0.7
(Chae, 2017)	Total	150	100.0

Table 4 covers details on a gender-segregated behavioral study about dominant nature of critique among people.

Table 4: Gender-segregated analysis of dominant nature of critique.

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
Which of the following are you?	All of the above.	Count	34	9	43
		% within Gender	30.6%	23.1%	28.7%
		% of Total	22.7%	6.0%	28.7%
	I criticize my own appearance.	Count	70	21	91
		% within Gender	63.1%	53.8%	60.7%
		% of Total	46.7%	14.0%	60.7%
	I criticize other people's appearances.	Count	7	9	16
		% within Gender	6.3%	23.1%	10.7%
		% of Total	4.7%	6.0%	10.7%
Total		Count	111	39	150
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5 is a representation of a gender-segregated behavioral study about frequency of self-comparisons with other people on social media.

Table 5: Gender-segregated analysis of frequency of participants' comparisons of themselves with others on social media.

| | | | Gender | | Total |
			Female	Male	
How often in past 30 days have you compared your appearance to your friends or celebrities on social media?	Always	Count	6	0	6
		% within Gender	5.4%	0.0%	4.0%
		% of Total	4.0%	0.0%	4.0%
	Never	Count	16	13	29
		% within Gender	14.4%	33.3%	19.3%
		% of Total	10.7%	8.7%	19.3%
	Often	Count	22	4	26
		% within Gender	19.8%	10.3%	17.3%
		% of Total	14.7%	2.7%	17.3%
	Rarely	Count	26	12	38
		% within Gender	23.4%	30.8%	25.3%
		% of Total	17.3%	8.0%	25.3%
	Sometimes	Count	41	10	51
		% within Gender	36.9%	25.6%	34.0%
(Chae, 2017)		% of Total	27.3%	6.7%	34.0%
Total		Count	111	39	150
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	74.0%	26.0%	100.0%

Table 6 shows frequency of digital manipulation when sharing pictures on social media. Those who Photoshop/edit their pictures regardless of frequency account for 66.7% of the total number of participants, opposed to the other 33.3%.

Table 6: Frequency of digital manipulation of images across participants.

		Frequency	Percent
How often did you edit/retouch your pictures by using photo-editing apps in the past 30 days? (Chae, 2017)	Always	5	3.3
	Never	50	33.3
	Often	13	8.7
	Rarely	49	32.7
	Sometimes	33	22.0
	Total	150	100.0

Table 7 shows whether participants had witnessed at least one event of body shaming on social media in their overall history of usage. In response to this 63.3% of respondents confirmed that they did in fact witness some form of body shaming over social media platforms, whereas the other 36.7% did not.

Table 7: Participants' revelations regarding witnessing body shaming events on social media.

		Frequency	Percent
Have you ever witnessed any event of body shaming on social media?	No	55	36.7
	Yes	95	63.3

Total	150	100.0

(Li, 2006)

Table 8 maps the extent of agreement and disagreement in response to certain statements presented to participants. Options given to respondents to were Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (D).

Table 8: Percentages of participants' responses to presented statements in the form of extent of agreement or disagreement.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.Social media affects how I think about myself as a person	19.3%	37.3%	26%	11.3%	6%
2. My weight/shape affects how other people think of me as a person (Cargill et al., 1999)	21.3%	36%	24%	13.3%	5.3%
3.When using social media, I compare myself to other people (Burnette et al., 2017)	16.7%	25.3%	32%	16%	10%
4.I have felt dissatisfied about my weight/shape (Cargill et al., 1999)	22%	27.3%	22%	14.7%	14%
5.I have tried to change my shape/weight by exercising (Cargill et al., 1999)	30%	30.7%	16.7%	14%	8.7%
6.I have tried to change shape/ weight by restricting the amount of food I eat (Cargill et al., 1999)	16.7%	29.3%	24%	18%	12%
7. Due to my desire to lose weight, I was not able to concentrate on daily life activities in past few days (Cargill et al., 1999)	12.7%	18%	20.7%	31.3%	17.3%
8. I have felt uncomfortable seeing my body e.g. in the mirror, in shop window etc. (Cargill et al., 1999)	12.7%	27.3%	20.7%	23.3%	16%
9.I have felt uncomfortable about others seeing my body e.g. in public etc. (Cargill et al., 1999)	20.7%	26%	22%	19.3%	12%
10. I wear clothes that will divert attention from my body	20.7%	24.7%	24%	20%	10.7%

(Yellowlees et al., 2019)					
11. I have been feeling depressed/ anxious because of my body image (Fitzsimmons-Craft et al., 2019)	16%	17.3%	16.7%	28.7%	21.3%

Analysis of the results presented in the Table 8 indicates that most of the questions have high percentage of answers falling in the category of "Agreed". However, with respect to question 7, about 31% responses (which are also the highest) fall in the category of "Disagreed". Similarly, about 28.7% (highest) responses to question 11 fell under the category of "Disagree" as well.

Table 9 shows responses to the final question where participants were asked about the overall impact of social media upon current body standards. 110 (73.3%) individuals testified that it had a negative impact, whereas the other 26.7% thought it was positive.

Table 9: Participants'' opinions on the nature of the impact of social media on body standards.

		Frequency	Percent
In your opinion, is the effect of social media on body standards positive or negative?	Negative	110	73.3
	Positive	40	26.7
	Total	150	100.0

VI.   DISCUSSION

The majority of respondents in terms of gender were females who fell under the age category of 19-21 years. Most respondents claimed that they spent around 4-6 hours daily on social media, which accounts for around 16% – 25% of an entire day. Out of 150 respondents, 60.7% reported behaviors of self-criticism in terms of appearance, which was prominently outweighed by the combined percentage of behaviors of other-criticism (10.7%) and self-and-other-criticism (28.7%). This is indicative of self-consciousness appearance, including body image. A gender-segregated analysis of revealed 63.1% females and 53.8% males criticizing their own appearance the most. The frequency of comparison with friends and celebrities on social media, 34% of respondents revealed that they establish comparisons between themselves and other users 'sometimes', followed by those who however, 'rarely' compared themselves to others at 25.3%. There are, however, a significant number of affirmative responses in this area that do indicate the existence of this practice among individuals.

Hence, over a century of research on social influence has established evidence that humans are highly receptive to the attitudes of others. Ravary et al., (2019) employ an evident from the analysis of the gathered data. Studying behavior in terms of frequency of digital manipulation of personal images, 33.3% claimed to have never edited their pictures, followed by 32.7% doing so rarely, and 22% answering 'sometimes'. However, the data is analyzing as a whole, 66.7 of individuals, regardless of relative frequency organized engage in this practice, while the other 33.3% did not, hence resulting in a significant number of affirmative responses in this area that indicate the existence of this practice among individuals. Propagation of ideal body standards may also increase by this practice as people are more likely to display idealized versions of themselves, as said by Kim & Chock, (2015).

On other hands, participants were then asked if they ever witnessed a body shaming event over social media. A staggering 63.3% of individuals answered 'yes'. The first part of these questions concluded at asking participants whether they felt dissatisfied with their weight/body shape, in response to which 27.3% agreed and 22% strongly agreed. This strongly implies that people had an ideal body image of themselves that they wished to achieve. This can be attributed to the fact that those who deviate from society's standards are shamed and embarrassed as said by Jain et al., (2020).

The questions gradually shifted from asking about existing perceptions and practices to activities and thoughts 'influenced' by social media. Individuals were asked about any attempts to change their weight/shape by exercising. A total of 60.7% agreed with the statement. Upon asking about any attempts to restrict food/intake to do the same, 29.3% agreed whereas 24% felt neutral about the statement. This showed that attempts to achieve the ideal body were observed being very common among people who were dissatisfied with their appearances. This is indicative of how lack of intervention and emotional control can lead to harmful practices such as eating disorders as proved by Jain et al., (2020).

A series of statements were presented to participants that were to be answered by marking extent of agreement or disagreement. Results showed that most individuals (37.3%) agreed to social media significantly affecting how they perceived themselves as a person. When questioned about others perception of themselves, 36% agreed and 21.3% strongly agreed that their weight/body shape affected other's perception about themselves, while 24% responded neutral. A rather neutral stance was observed in 32% of responses when asked if they compared themselves to others on social media.

Participants then responded to statements on psychological effects of social media. A combined 30.7% of respondents admitted to not being able to concentrate on daily life activities due to their wish to lose weight. Another 40% claimed that they felt uncomfortable seeing their own body, for example in a mirror, opposed to 39.3% who generally disagreed. In general, 46.7% of people admitted that they felt uncomfortable about their body being seen by others. 45.4% of respondents confessed to wearing clothes that divert attention away from their bodies. However, when asked about feeling depressed/anxious about their body image, 33.3% agreed to experiencing these symptoms, opposed to 50% disagreeing. Though minority of respondents having affirmative response towards the final question shows that mental illnesses can very much be a consequence of insecurity of body image, which is in line with findings of Gani & Jalal, (2020).

A concluding question was asked regarding participants' thoughts on the nature of the overall impact of social media upon body standards i.e. positive or negative. 73.3% of responded with 'negative', with the other 26.7% choosing the answer 'positive'. This shows people having past experiences, awareness about the consequences of social media usage prior to taking the survey.

As for the hypotheses stated previously, the study concludes with the given results.

Participants agreed to social media influencing their activities and way of thinking, thereby agreeing upon the correlation between the two variables of social media and body standards. Thus:

H1 - There is a significant relationship between social media and body standards.

The study overall was strongly suggestive of a highly negative influence of social media upon ideal body image, which participants also agreed to. In addition to this, majority of participants reported witnessing events related to body shaming and other negative experiences. Therefore:

H2 - There is significant negative psychological impact of social media on body standards.

Investigation into the behaviors and activities of participants showed possibility of involvement in activities that may reach a harmful extent, if no intervention is involved. Engaging in practices such as food-intake-restriction, self-criticism correlated to idealistic body image and the critique of others, for achieving a desired body type results in lower self-esteem, mental illnesses and even eating disorders as discussed earlier. In conclusion:

H3 - There is a significant relationship between social media and harmful practices involving attempts of achievement of the ideal body type.

Hence, all three hypotheses formulated in the light of similar such studies have been proved by evidence.

RESEARCH LIMITATION

One of the main limitations of the study was the sample size. The population of Dubai is approximately 3.4 million as of September 2020. (DSC, 2021) Out of this, individuals aged 15-24 years are estimated to be around 1.21 million. (UAE

Population Statistics 2021 (Infographics) | GMI, 2021) When the sample size is compared to the total number of individuals, the sample size is only 0.021%. The sample size for this study is relatively minute compared to the total size of the targeted population, implying that it will cast doubts on the inferences of the study. Therefore, we should increase the sample size of target population, at least to a significant size of 10% of 1.21 million individuals. However, the percentage of responses in this study is only 0.021% of the total population, which differs by 99.79% from the significant percentage. In statistics, sample size plays very significant role leading to accuracy of the results. This means that it might be the results of this study may not reflect accurately enough in statistics and needs for more researches. Furthermore, details like medical history in terms of mental illnesses etic, were not covered, as our objective is specific in which may influence overall data. Imbalanced gender participation must also be considered since gender differences may cause changes in data.

VII.   RECOMMENDATIONS

People spend more time on social media than ever, thereby presenting a higher probability of exposure to its pros and cons. If its use is left unmonitored, disadvantages are not highlighted, and no form of intervention takes place, the outcome will only be the growth of similar problems, which can consequently result in a vicious cycle that would run for a course of generation unless any measures are taken to break it. Change of habits and lifestyle are steps that can be taken to limit such problems. Initiatives taken by the government, concerned organizations to educate and raise awareness are also strategies. Early intervention and counselling can be prioritized in order to help those affected. Psychiatrists, psychologists, and research scholars may collaborate and produce joint efforts to study and sketch out mental health intervention and treatment plans for those in need. With potentially no data present on this subject matter for the targeted demographic, it is a civil responsibility and imperative for researchers and others concerned to instigate studies into this subject to produce more accurate information.

VIII.   CONCLUSION

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between social media and body standards, and the nature of the impact that social media has upon the body standards of the youth of Dubai. The existence improved a significant relationship of the correlation between social media and body standards was proved by evidence, as well as non-significant relationship (negative) psychological influence of social media upon body standards.

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