Social Media' overall impact women's perception on their bodies

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Abstract: The development of social media has led to faster information dissemination in the internet world; those contents involve the ideal body images for both women and men, imposing negative impacts on people's perception of their bodies and their ways to live lives. In my paper, I want to address how social media construct images and spread words that mislead women to conduct the unhealthy weight-loss process; in addition, I want to examine what kind of influence social media can have or cast on the general public's conception about body forms. Previous research and articles have systematically discussed the harmful effects when people spend a majority of their time immersing themselves in the body ideals present by social media; also, they reveal what kind of health-damaging consequences brought by social media if adolescents and adults blindly believe the so-called perfect body images demonstrate on it. However, they haven't suggested which methods are applied by social media operators when they attempt to indoctrinate the general public about the ideal body types. I want to use this paper to educate the audience. I want to use this paper to educate people about negative effects which social media can impose on us, especially those we tend to neglect as the usage of it becomes a daily routine. I collect the existing data and findings from different scholarly articles and offer my own interpretation in my paper. The glamorous body images present online can often mislead us about the healthy ways to manage our body weight and body types, and we should possess a clear mind instead of following what's seemingly right about the appearance of our physical being.

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1   Introduction

Social Media negatively shapes women's view on their body images because it causes body dissatisfaction through standardizing body ideals and creating appearances comparisons. Lewallen and Morawitz mention that scholars like Luff and Gray find that magazines and advertisements depict the ideal body type by emphasizing on the level of thinness that women should attain, especially in western culture[8]. According to the YouGov Body Images, 76% of US adults say that the media supports an unrealistic body image for females; 65% of 16 to 34 years old American age groups consider social media advocate an "unattainable body image" for women [1]. Therefore, dissatisfaction happens among them. In the book called Influence of Social Media Use on

Adolescent Females' Perceptions of Their Body Image, the National Eating Disorder suggests that young girls in countries like United States suffer eating disorder and depression due to social media standardizing body image, and they often have passive feelings or low sel-esteem regarding their own bodies as they compare themselves with the women possessing perfect body types on the internet [7]. The cause behind their eating disorder and depression is indicated in an journal called Body Image. It stated that when young women "spent more time on social media," they discontent more with their body shape by comparing their appearances with their peers [3]. And girls have the tendency to frequently comparing themselves with other females [7].Yet, the data and findings only present an overview of the social media's impact: they fail to illustrate how Social Media intentionally creates a perfect model for women's body image and makes them mentally generate displeasure with their body shape. There must be a reason to explain why social media can easily affect or even attempt to uniform women's aesthetic views regarding their appearances. Based on one of adolescent high school girl's experience, she had an answer. Between eighth and ninth grade, she attempted to maintain a so-called ideal body shape. When she searched for clothes or jeans on social media, she often automatically received various pictures demonstrating two types of girls: Whereas one girl manifested her tenuous arms and waist-length measured 55cm, the other girl had muscular arms and waist size equals 65cm. Her eagerness of wanting to decrease the amount of fat in my body became intensified if she spent more time on social media. In addition, anxiousness arose as she saw images of girls who could fit in a zero or one-sized skirt from a fashion shop and still had a large amount of space between her waist and the cloth. She started to involuntarily notice her fat on the body and criticize herself for not controlling my diet. That was, she made a comparison between my appearance and the girls presented on social media posts. Even though the publishers of the fashion pictures only provided visual illustrations of the girls' body shape without stating how the standard weight should be like, mentally, she decided my ultimate goal was that she needed to have the same slim waist similar to the girl.

2   Analysis

2.1   Eating Disorder

On the positive side, social media causes women to dissatisfy their body might encourage an increased amount of exercise and the pursuit of a healthy diet. However, social media can harm people's physical well-being by leading to unduly eating disorders if it renders the public to consider maintaining a lean body as a social norm that they must adapt. Allison Forti, a professor at Wake Forest University," once said: Social media "serves as an outlet to mask, cultivate, or inspire eating disorder"' telling females they should focus on striving for a slim body shape [6]. While some social media platform advocates and support a healthy lifestyle, they, at the same time, place people on the verge of suffering orthorexia Nervosa-characterizes a person who excessively immerses oneself in healthy consuming food that gives rise to depression and physical problems [6]. The elements underlying people's discontents are how they compare their own bodies with others, how they feel about their overall body images, and what emotions arise when they view their own bodies [9]. Often times, negative emotions like embarrassment, guilty, and dissatisfaction occupy people's mindset [9].In several cases, social media can even make adolescent children, especially those below twenty years old, prone to have dissatisfaction regarding their bodies. In addition, they have a higher inclination to dislike their overall body shape in comparison to boys of the same ages [4]. A "meta-analysis" focusing on a set of 25 studies that manifest how the exposure to social media pictures demonstrating thin body paradigms impact adolescent girls. The result revealed the girls' displeasure when perceiving their body shape aggravates upon observing posts of slender girls [4]. In comparison to men, media tend to focus more on promoting women who maintain diet on a

daily basis. 60 Minutes Australia, a Youtube channel, reported an interview with Ashley Thomas. She described her orthorexia symptoms during her teenage years. She was fanatically infatuated with the healthy diet menus that molded the ideal body shape shared on Instagram. In addition, for the sake of pursuing a slender body, she stopped herself from eating food; she even reached the point where she felt breathing cause her fat to increase. Later, her father needed to force her to eat more food by opening her mouth and shove all the comestibles into her throat [5]. At the end of the interview, Thomas indicated one of the reasons, which is the most significant factor for her deep obsession with consuming a healthy diet, for her fanaticism in losing weight. Even though she was aware that the people who shared people's healthy diets on Instagram provided no criteria proving they were experts in food consumption or fitness training, she neglected the degree of their reliability because many fans were following their accounts [5].

2.2 Speculation/Explanation about Thomas' mania with losing weight

When Thomas visually observe the number of the fans following accounts demonstrating the healthy menus for exercising, a feeling of envy occur in her mindset that she begins to perceive the fans or the increasing number of "likes" reveal on Instagram as a type of reward for the ways of mainly consuming food other than sugary meal or desert. Maybe, Thomas somehow believes that if she starts to lose weight and reduce the accumulated fat in her body, she will receive compliments or other people's jealousy in both social media and her life once she finally attains the goal to eliminate the redundant fat. Also, in Thomas' subconsciousness, she must regard those healthy diet menus as the paradigms and maintaining a slim body as the social norm that she should conform to or even obey due to a herd mentality. A need to integrate herself into the group of people who pursue a slender body emerges from her mind. As a result, she naturally considers pursuing a so-called perfect body shape, meaning for females to preserve lean waist, legs, elbows, wrists, seem the right way to lose weight. Taken a college girls's usage of social media into account, she had subscribed to a vast amount of accounts. They all have similar traits which more than one hundred thousand fans give their comments or "likes." The number of fans seemed to play a more vital role when she decide whether she should choose to subscribe or no. She often ignored those people with fewer followers on social media. Once, in her leisure time after school, she decided to test myself. She randomly picked two accounts on Instagram that illustrated different images or videos about fitness exercises. Before she pressed the "subscribe" button on her phone, her attention inevitably focused on how many fans that the two followers had. At last, She selected the blue "Subscribe" button of the account with relatively more fans. Accordingly, the media users who own a vast amount of followers have visually conveyed how much acceptance they've received from various people and thus demonstrate the credibility in their contents. Gradually, people generate a herd mentality which makes them blindly believe the accounts are trustworthy and start to subscribe. In this case, the media users sharing their or others' slim body shape and their daily menu designing for maintaining perfect appearances will consistently attract more followers whether or not they present any reliable scientific evidence to justify their trustworthiness.

2.3 How social media users try to monetize term eyeballs

In the previous paragraphs, women explain and describe the harm that social media render on females; yet, how do social media users try to monetize term eyeballs, which invisibly causes them to dissatisfy with their bodies? As mentioned previously, people tend to dislike their bodies more if they devote more time to social media usage. But how exactly does that work? The most significant step relates to how well the media users present flawless types of body images. Most social media provide people with photo-editing tools to perfect their appearances. For example, Instagram

displays different filters for editing images. Selecting my favorite background colors, adjusting the picture's size, brightness, contrast ratio, and overall construction are always part of the process of successfully uploading images into the account. The background filter, in particular, can lessen blemishes on their skin, whether they have any acne on their body or the dark spots under my eyes due to sleep deficiency. After the photo polishing procedures, the system adorns their picture and reaches the effect that they   won't find any imperfection in my overall appearance. Therefore, when someone decides to post any content about make-up, fitness exercise, body shape, they always have the channel presenting the best versions of themselves(Fleps). Most importantly, photo-shop editing gives rise to females' discontentment with their bodies because social media reveal the visible difference between photos with the editing tools supplied by social media and those without any additional perfecting method. Once they search posts about people whose bodies undergo fitness exercise, social media mostly never provide pictures that demonstrate prominent defections. As a result, they envy or jealous the ideal body shape exhibit in the social media and thus become unhappy with their weight or lack of muscles on their arms or legs.

2.4   Why Body Image matters

Every morning, when we wake up, we directly observe our status through the bathroom's mirror; body image might predestinate our overall condition whenever we step out of the room into the everyday routine. We probably feel awkward or embarrass as we see the slacken skin on our belly, face, or arms. For the group of people who stay punctual to participate in classes, dates, works, businesses, or other vital events, the unkempt hair, protruding dark circles under our eyes, and new appeared acne upon our forehead, cheek, and nose may frustrate us and influence our mood throughout the day's progression. Similarly, body image easily effect us because we interact with various people everyday. When we ramble on the field schools, the corridor of workplaces, we encounter various people with different body shapes. Even though society never imposes any regulations or rules stating the kinds of features that ideal or perfect body image should possess, we may find ourselves gossips about the females or girls who have pale skin, slim arms, legs, and waists. Our jealousy arises and escalates as we interact with the groups of people with perfect body proportions. People who operate social media might realize and comprehend people's mentality in perceiving females and males who possess a slender body; they thus increase the recommendations about models and celebrities owning slim appearances. As the number of "likes" and complimentary comments rises in social media, the social media operator gradually convinces the public that the ideal body shape or image should appear skinny.

3   Conclusion

Social media has affected our different aspects of life and casted dangers regarding the it mostly led to health threatening consequences since the it emphasizes the beauty standards for women. It directs female's mentality since it can easily arose their dissatisfaction because it invisibly made them starting to compare their body-shapes with the so-called ideal female body types posted online. It doesn't educate women about the right ways to maintain a strong and stout bodies; it only immerses them in the thinking that they should maintain a thin and lean body. When we preoccupied with the picture, audios, or other kinds of information online, we tended to neglect the fact that the social media gradually drives our feelings and emotions; this research paper is meant to discover the factors, which we often find ourselves unaware of, of why social media impacts our lives. Understanding the idea of online materials manipulate our behaviors can better help us to begin feeling aware of how can we possibly prevent ourselves from fully let the social media to own the domination in our live; we should always have our own opinions regarding the standard of

beauty that we shouldn't let any online platforms to lead our thoughts or behaviors. This study, however, didn't encompass any self-directed survey regarding the logarithms of whether people do feel the social media has impacted them throughout their lives; also, the research process did not encompass any specific reasons or generate any theory regarding why social media can easily change our perspectives toward our own body conditions. This study fail to encompass scholars and excerpts' examination regarding the capability that social media has to manipulate people's emotions and thoughts.

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